NATION

8 die as rains lash M'rashtra; alert in coastal areas

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BUSINESS

Eight top-10 firms lose total 1.65L cr in market value slide

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SPORTS

Gill to build happy team as India gear up for England Tests

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Iran targets Adani's port in Israel

Adani Group denies claim; Israeli strikes in Iran have killed 406 and wounded 654 people

TEL AVIV, 15 JUNE

Iranian missiles struck Israel's Haifa port and an adjacent oil facility on Saturday night, causing massive damage and killing at least four people. Among the major losses was Indian conglomerate Adani Group's $4.2 billion cargo terminal, a key infrastructure asset handling nearly 30 per cent of Israel's imports.

However, Adani Group said the port was unharmed and denied the charge.

The missile barrage, part of Iran's 'True Promise III' operation launched by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), also targeted the Arab city of Tamra near Haifa. Iranian state media reported extensive fires across strategic sites, while Israeli media confirmed major damage in the region.

In retaliation, Israel launched a wave of strikes on key Iranian nuclear and military sites, including the Ministry of Defence headquarters and the SPND nuclear project centre, which Israel claims are central to Tehran's nuclear weapons development.

The conflict also reached Iran's vital energy infrastructure. An Israeli drone reportedly triggered a powerful explosion at a natural gas processing plant. Additionally, Iran was forced to partially suspend operations at the South Pars gas field, the world's largest, after an Israeli strike caused a fire there.

Fires also broke out at two key fuel and refinery sites in Tehran on Saturday, further threatening Iran's already fragile energy sector.

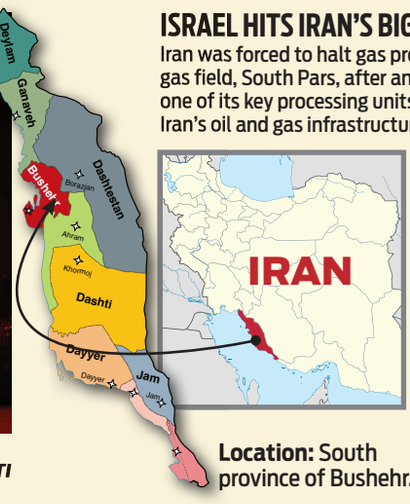
Israeli strikes in Iran have killed at least 406 people and wounded another 654, a human rights group said Sunday. *—PTI*

>>>More on Pages 6 & 7

Flames rise from an oil storage facility after it appeared to have been hit by an Israeli strike in Tehran, Iran, early Sunday ***PHOTO: PTI***

ISRAEL HITS IRAN'S BIGGEST OIL REFINERY

Iran was forced to halt gas production at the world's largest gas field, South Pars, after an Israeli airstrike caused a fire at one of its key processing units. It is Israel's first direct strike on Iran's oil and gas infrastructure. Here are the details:



Area: 9,700 sqkm but shares 3,700 sqkm with Qatar.

Capacity: 51 trillion cubic metres of gas.

$250 million daily loss.

12 million cubic metres/day production loss.

Location: South province of Bushehr.

- The refinery supplies about two-thirds of Iran's natural gas.
- Iran is the world's third-largest gas producer after the US and Russia and produces 275 billion cubic metres annually.

AI CRASH: DNA TESTS IDENTIFY 47 VICTIMS

AHMEDABAD, 15 JUNE

Three days after a London-bound Air India plane crashed in Ahmedabad, authorities have so far identified 47 victims through DNA testing and bodies of 24 have been handed over to their families, an official said on Sunday.

As many of the bodies were burnt beyond recognition or damaged otherwise, authorities are carrying out DNA tests to establish the identity of victims of the horrific tragedy.

Ex-CM Rupani's remains identified

The mortal remains of former Gujarat chief minister Vijay Rupani have been identified through DNA test, officials said on Sunday, as investigations into the crash intensified. Rupani was among the 241 passengers killed in the horrific crash. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

Bereaved family members of Christian Rachnaben Rozar and Christian Rozar David, victims of crash, mourn during their last rites in Ahmedabad, Gujarat on Sunday ***PHOTO: PTI***

PM arrives in Cyprus; to attend G7 in Canada held amid global tension

NICOSIA, 15 JUNE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has commenced a two-day visit to Cyprus, marking the first trip by an Indian prime minister to the nation in over 20 years. Upon his arrival, he was warmly welcomed by President Nikos Christodoulides at Larnaca International Airport. Modi expressed his gratitude on social media, emphasising the significance of this visit in bolstering India-Cyprus relations, particularly in areas such as trade, investment, and security.

During his stay, Modi is scheduled to hold crucial discussions with President Christodoulides and address business leaders in Limassol. He described Cyprus as a close ally and an important partner in the Mediterranean and the European Union.

Simultaneously, leaders from the G7 nations are gathering in the Canadian Rockies for a summit overshadowed by rising tensions in the Middle East and ongoing trade disputes ignited by US President Donald Trump. British Prime Minister Keir Starmer aims to address the escalating violence and de-escalation efforts during discussions with fellow leaders. Notably, Trump's approach remains unpredictable, potentially influencing bilateral relations at the summit. Following his visit to Cyprus, Modi is set to attend the G7 meeting in Canada before travelling to Croatia for additional talks with European leaders.

His tour aims to express appreciation for international support against cross-border terrorism and facilitate collaborative efforts in combating it. *—PTI*

>>>More on Pages 3, 5 & 6

> **The three-nation tour is also an opportunity to thank partner countries for their steadfast support to India in its fight against cross-border terrorism and to galvanise global understanding on tackling terrorism in all its forms and manifestations**
>
> —Narendra Modi, PM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi being welcomed by the members of the Indian diaspora upon his arrival at the hotel in Cyprus ***PHOTO: PTI***

7 killed in Kedarnath chopper crash

RUDRAPRAYAG, 15 JUNE

Seven people were killed as a helicopter carrying them from the Kedarnath shrine in Uttarakhand crashed early Sunday in the forests of Gaurikund amid poor visibility.

The Bell 407 helicopter operated by private firm Aryan Aviation Pvt Ltd crashed between Gaurikund and Trijuginarayan in Kedarghati and caught fire, killing all on board.

Zero visibility caused by bad weather apparently led to the crash.

The Civil Aviation Ministry said the accident will be investigated by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB).

There were 5 passengers, one infant and one crew member on board the helicopter that took off from Guptakashi at 5:10am and landed at Shri Kedarnath ji Helipad at 5:18am. It took off again for Guptkanshi and crashed near Gaurikund.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation has reduced frequency of helicopter operations to chardham shrines of Kedarnath, Badrinath, Yamunotri and Gangotri.

Helicoptre services on the chardham yatra route will remain suspended for two days.

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said a strict standard operating procedure should be prepared for the operation of heli services. Inspection of the vehicle's technical condition should be made mandatory. Weather status should also be considered.

A high-level committee will be constituted to investigate helicopter accidents that took place in the state..

A common command and coordination centre will be established in Dehradun. Officials of DGCA, the state disaster management department, Uttarakhand Civil Aviation Development Authority and companies operating heli services in the state will be part of this centre. *—PTI*

NDRF and SDRF personnel search for survivors after a helicopter crashed near the Kedarnath shrine in Rudraprayag district in Uttarakhand on Sunday ***PHOTO: PTI***

5 teenagers drown in Telangana's Godavari River

KARIMNAGAR, 15 JUNE

In a tragic incident, five boys drowned in Godavari River near Basara on Sunday while taking a holy dip before visiting a temple, police said. Avinash Kumar, Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) said, Bhainsa, a group of around 20 people from Hyderabad had traveled to Basara to offer prayers at the famous Gnana Saraswathi temple. Before visiting the shrine, five teenagers from the group entered the river for performing a ritual bath. The water level reportedly rose suddenly, sweeping the boys in the strong current. Rescue teams later recovered the bodies and shifted them to a nearby government hospital, where doctors confirmed that all five died before arrival. The bodies were sent for post-mortem examination, and authorities are awaiting official report. *—PTI*

4 dead as 30-yr-old Pune bridge collapses

PUNE, 15 JUNE

Four people died and 18 were seriously injured after a 30-year-old iron bridge on Indrayani river collapsed on Sunday afternoon in Pune's Maval tehsil, officials said.

While two people succumbed to injuries during treatment after being rescued, the bodies of two persons were recovered from underneath the collapsed portion of the bridge, officials said.

"We suspect one person is trapped underneath the bridge," Talegaon Dabhade police station senior inspector Pradeep Rayannawar said late evening.

The incident took place at 3.30pm in Kundamala area, which has been seeing heavy rains over the past few days, giving the river a steady flow, another official said. It was not raining when the bridge collapsed in the presence of at least 100 picnickers, he added.

"So far 38 people have been rescued of which 18 sustained serious injuries and they are currently under treatment in three different hospitals," district administration informed. Maharashtra Minister of Disaster Management Girish Mahajan, who was at the site monitoring rescue efforts, said the bridge collapsed under the weight of a large number of tourists.

"The bridge was meant only for pedestrians and there was a warning board there stating that it cannot be used by two-wheelers. It seems people on the bridge did not pay heed to these instructions, which caused the incident," Mahajan told reporters.

He said the state government has announced compensation of Rs 5 lakh each to the kin of the deceased.

Queried about the lack of police presence at the spot despite it attracting crowds amid rains, the minister said this would be probed. *—PTI*

People stand near an iron bridge over the Indrayani river after it collapsed in Pune district on Sunday ***PHOTO: PTI***

BINS COPS PLEA

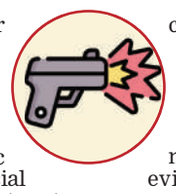
Police firing in plain clothes not official duty: SC

NEW DELHI, 15 JUNE

- The incident occurred on 16 June, 2015, when nine plainclothes policemen allegedly surrounded and opened fire on a Hyundai i20 car, killing the driver, Mukhjit Singh alias Mukha. Witnesses supported the

The Supreme Court has ruled that police personnel firing upon a civilian vehicle while in plain clothes cannot be considered as acting in the line of official duty. The apex court dismissed the appeal of nine Punjab policemen, including a Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), seeking quashing of murder and evidence destruction charges in a 2015 alleged fake encounter case.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta rejected the claim that prior sanction under Section 197 of the CrPC was required for prosecution, ruling that the acts had no reasonable nexus to lawful public duty. "The cloak of official duty cannot be extended to acts intended to thwart justice," the court said.



The court reinstated charges against DCP Parampal Singh for allegedly ordering the removal of the car's number plate to destroy evidence. The incident occurred on 16 June, 2015, when nine plainclothes policemen allegedly surrounded and opened fire on a Hyundai i20 car, killing the driver, Mukhjit Singh alias Mukha. Witnesses supported the version in statements under Section 200 CrPC.

A Special Investigation Team later found the self-defence claim fabricated and recommended prosecution for culpable homicide. CCTV footage also showed police vehicles converging on the car. The court upheld the orders of the magistrate and sessions court to summon and frame charges. *—PTI*

US to extend travel ban on 36 nations including African

WASHINGTON, 15 JUNE

The Trump administration may soon double its travel ban list, targeting 36 nations — 25 in Africa and several in the Caribbean. A classified memo signed by Secretary of State Marco Rubio demands affected countries submit security reform plans by Wednesday or face entry restrictions. Cited issues include visa overstays, fraud, weak ID systems, and citizenship-for-investment abuses. Nations failing to meet benchmarks within 60 days risk full or partial bans. Critics call the move discriminatory, echoing Trump's earlier Muslim-majority bans. The State Department declined comment. Affected countries include Nigeria, Egypt, Antigua and Barbuda, Syria, Tonga, and Vanuatu. Legal and diplomatic fallout looms. *—Agencies*

JD(S) LAUNCHES MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Ex-PM HD Deve Gowda, Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy and youth wing president Nikhil Kumaraswamy at the launch of a JD(S) membership drive at the party office in Bengaluru on Sunday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Yoga enthusiasts rehearse at Mysuru Palace premises

MYSURU, 15 JUNE

Hundreds of yoga enthusiasts gathered at Mysuru Palace premises on Sunday for a rehearsal session ahead of the 11th International Day of Yoga celebrations scheduled for 21 June. The event was jointly organised by the Department of Ayush and Zilla Panchayat. Participants practised various asanas, pranayama, and surya namaskars. District Ayush Officer Dr Renukadevi said that Mysuru, being a prominent yoga hub, is set to host a grand celebration, with over 15,000 participants expected at the palace grounds from 6 am. Rehearsals have been held at various locations since last month to ensure smooth execution. Participants are advised to wear T-shirts and track pants, and bring their own yoga mats. Yoga enthusiasts from JSS Institutions, private schools, Yoga Federation of Mysore, yoga schools, NCC, NSS, and students will join the event. Authorities have been directed to ensure basic facilities, cleanliness and deploy ambulances and fire tenders at the venue. *—PTI*

Rape accused shot in leg, arrested by cops in Dandeli

DANDELI, 15 JUNE

A rape accused was shot in the leg and arrested by police in Dandeli on Saturday evening after he violently resisted arrest. The accused, Fairoz Yasin Yaragatti, had been on the run since allegedly raping a 60-year-old woman on 12 June. Superintendent of Police for Uttara Kannada, Narayan M, informed reporters on Sunday that Fairoz was hiding in a forested area along Kulagi Road in Dandeli taluk. Acting on a tip-off, a police team led by Dandeli Sub-Inspector Kiran Patil tracked him down and ordered him to surrender. However, the accused retaliated by throwing stones at the officers and then lunged at them with a knife. Inspector Patil fired two warning shots into the air before shooting Fairoz in the left leg to neutralise the threat. Fairoz was taken into custody and underwent surgery to remove the bullet. He is currently out of danger, according to police. Three police personnel – Inspector Patil, Krishappa Bellavari, and Imran Kambarganavi – sustained injuries in the confrontation. All three are receiving treatment at the government hospital in Dandeli. *—PTI*

Rains, floods, landslides disrupt life across State

Dakshina Kannada, Udupi hit as Krishna swells in Yadgir

BENGALURU/ MANGALURU, 15 JUNE

Torrential rains battered several parts of Karnataka on Sunday, disrupting normal life with widespread waterlogging, flooding, and landslides. Coastal districts, particularly Dakshina Kannada and Udupi, bore the brunt, while the Krishna River swelled in Yadgir district due to heavy inflows from neighbouring Maharashtra.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), parts of Dakshina Kannada received 110–210 mm of rainfall in 24 hours. Mangaluru recorded 170 mm, and Panambur saw 210 mm. Udupi district reported 50 mm. An orange alert was issued for Dakshina Kannada, Udupi, Shivamogga, Chikkamagaluru, and Kodagu, forecasting thunderstorms with lightning.

Several low-lying areas in Mangaluru, including Pumpwell, Bikarnakatte, Kaikamba, and Kankanady, faced severe waterlogging. Inundation at Pumpwell, a key traffic junction, caused significant delays, forcing buses from Bengaluru to divert via Nanthur Circle. Residents blamed inadequate stormwater drainage and ineffective responses from the Mangaluru City Corporation.

A landslide blocked part of National Highway-169 near Kettikallu in Belthangady taluk, halting vehicular movement. While no casualties were reported, clearing operations are ongoing.

Emergency teams have been deployed across Mangaluru to clear clogged drains and monitor vulnerable zones. Citizens are demanding long-term solutions, including desilting and proper drainage infrastructure. In Udupi, localities such as Brahmavar, Kalsanka, and Kundapur taluk villages experienced heavy flooding. Service roads near NH-66 were also submerged.

In Yadgir, the Basavasagar Dam in Narayanpur released 52,000 cusecs of water into the Krishna River after opening 14 gates due to an inflow of 45,000 cusecs. The dam, with a capacity of 33.33 TMC ft, currently holds 28.20 TMC ft of water. District administrations have advised the public to avoid waterlogged and landslide-prone areas and report emergencies to disaster response units. Farmers in rain-hit areas have reported crop losses. *—PTI*

People push an ambulance through a waterlogged road in Mangaluru on Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

Bridge washes away in Khanapur

BELAGAVI, 15 JUNE

A temporary bridge constructed over the Malaprabha River in Khanapur taluk was swept away on Sunday morning due to heavy rainfall and strong river currents. The 50-metre structure, built beside an under-construction concrete bridge, linked Belagavi to Goa. Fortunately, no casualties were reported.

The incident halted traffic on this key route, though alternative roads remain operational. Continuous downpours in the river's catchment area, flowing through dense forest, triggered the collapse. Khanapur taluk, known for its thick forests, recorded the second-highest rainfall in State after Agumbe. Authorities are assessing options for restoring connectivity. *—PTI*

A road washed away by flood water **PHOTO: SCREENGRAB**

BJP plans stir on 17 June over IPL stampede in City

BENGALURU, 15 JUNE

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Sunday announced a protest to be held at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on 17 June, calling for the resignation of Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar. The party alleges the two are directly responsible for the fatal stampede that occurred near the Chinnaswamy Stadium on 4 June during celebrations marking Royal Challengers Bengaluru's IPL victory.

The stampede, which erupted as nearly 2.5 lakh fans gathered to glimpse their cricketing heroes, left 11 dead and at least 56 injured. BJP leader and former Minister K Gopalaiah stated that police had formally advised the Chief Minister against hosting the event, yet the government chose to proceed. He termed the tragedy a "black spot in Karnataka's history".

Gopalaiah also criticised the State government's move to restart the caste census, alleging it was a diversionary tactic to shift focus from the mishandling of the event. He demanded the government reveal how much taxpayers' money was spent on the previous census.

Separately, Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka wrote to the Chief Minister urging an emergency session of the legislature to discuss the incident. He cited public anxiety over crowd control and administrative failures, and called for a comprehensive debate on safety at public events.

Ashoka also alleged that multiple probes had been launched merely to shield powerful figures and scapegoat officials, while calling for compensation and long-term safety reforms. *—PTI*

State tops nation in wind power capacity

BENGALURU, 15 JUNE

Karnataka has topped the country in wind power capacity addition for the financial year 2024–25, with a record 1,331.48 MW installed, earning it the first-place award at Global Wind Day 2025 celebrations in Bengaluru on Sunday.

State Energy Minister KJ George received the award from Union Minister for New and Renewable Energy, Pralhad Joshi, during the event themed 'Pawan-Urja: Powering the Future of India'.

Tamil Nadu and Gujarat followed, adding 1,136.37 MW and 954.76 MW respectively.

"This milestone is more than a number; it reflects Karnataka's leadership in clean energy," said George. The state's total installed wind power capacity now stands at 7,351 MW.

He announced plans for 17 GW of upcoming wind projects, including over 5 GW under the Renewable Energy Cluster Programme. Infrastructure upgrades include 20+ substations, 400 KV corridors, and Renewable Energy Reserve Zones.

George highlighted that Rs 4 lakh crore worth of renewable energy investments were signed at the 2025 Global Investors Meet—accounting for 40% of total investments.

Joshi lauded the State, calling it the "land of Hanuman, the original wind power symbol," and noted India is now the world's fourth-largest wind power generator with 51.5 GW capacity. He emphasised the national 2030 target of 500 GW renewable energy—100 GW from wind, including 30 GW offshore—and called for boosting domestic manufacturing and exports.

A report titled 'Ramping up Local Manufacturing for Wind Turbines in India' was also released. *—PTI*

12-YR-OLD GIRL FALLS IN MANALI AS ZIPLINE ROPE SNAPS

NAGPUR, 15 JUNE

A 12-year-old girl from Maharashtra's Nagpur suffered severe injuries after she fell during a zipline ride in Himachal Pradesh' Manali. While vacationing with her family in Manali, Trisha Bijwe fell while riding a zipline after the rope connected to a harness she wore snapped. A viral video showed the girl falling on boulders below after the zipline rope connected to the harness snaps. Trisha suffered several fractures and underwent an operation. Her condition was reportedly stable. *—PTI*

Kailash Yatra resumes after five-year break

GHAZIABAD, 15 JUNE

The long-awaited Kailash Mansarovar Yatra has officially resumed after a five-year break, with the first batch of 39 pilgrims being flagged off from Ghaziabad on Sunday. The ceremonial send-off took place at the Kailash Mansarovar Bhavan in Indirapuram, where Uttar Pradesh's Tourism and Culture Minister Jaiveer Singh marked the occasion.

Alongside the pilgrims, the inaugural group includes two liaison officers. Although 46 individuals initially registered, some were unable to take part due to health concerns, according to official sources. A special 'Shaivite' prayer was conducted, accompanied by traditional instruments such as the damru, mridang, turhi, and dholak, creating a spiritually charged atmosphere filled with chants of "Har Har Mahadev".

The event was attended by notable figures including Cabinet Minister Sunil Sharma, Ghaziabad MP Atul Garg, Principal Secretary for Religious Affairs and Culture Mukesh Meshram, and District Magistrate Deepak Meena. Minister Singh described the resumption of the pilgrimage as a historic moment, underscoring the government's dedication to promoting religious tourism.

The UP government is also providing Rs 1 lakh financial assistance to each resident undertaking the Yatra. *—PTI*

A FATHER'S LOVE

Two migrant labourers play with their children on Fathers' Day in Bengaluru on Sunday. From West Bengal's Nadia district, the families have come a long way to make a living in the City **PHOTO: MOAHMMED ASAD/PTI**

DRECTOR, CREW SAFE

Boat capsizes during 'Kantara-1' shoot

SHIVAMOGGA, 15 JUNE

A boat capsized in a reservoir during the shooting of Kannada film Kantara: Chapter 1, but actor-director Rishab Shetty and 30 crew members escaped unhurt, averting a major mishap, police sources said.

This incident allegedly occurred during the filming in the Mani reservoir in the Masti Katte region of Shivamogga district, they added.

The accident occurred in a shallow zone of the reservoir, near an area locally known as Melina Koppa, which helped avert a possible tragedy.

However, cameras and other filming equipment are believed to have been lost to the water. The losses are yet to be assessed. Thirthahalli police said people onboard escaped unhurt.

Theatre artist Ramadas Poojary said making a movie on the spirits of Dakshina Kannada is always risky, as the spirits do not like the commercialisation of any activity connected to them.

However, Rishab Shetty, who reveres the spirits, has conducted elaborate poojas to them and was given permission to make the film, says Poojary.

A senior crew member who spoke to PTI on the condition of anonymity said some of the crew members panicked when the boat overturned, but since it was in the shallow waters, all of them waded through to safety. "It shows that the spirits have blessed us in some way," the crew member said.

This is yet another setback for Kantara: Chapter 1.

In the past month alone, the production team has lost three artists to unrelated incidents, adding to the challenges faced by the film's crew. *—PTI*

- The accident occurred in a shallow zone of the Mani reservoir in the Masti Katte region of Shivamogga district, near an area locally known as Melina Koppa

Allu Arjun receives best actor award for 'Pushpa-2'

HYDERABAD, 15 JUNE

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy presented the Gaddar Telangana Film Awards 2024 at a glittering ceremony on Saturday night. Allu Arjun received the Best Actor award for his performance in the blockbuster 'Pushpa-2'. Veteran director Mani Ratnam was honoured with the Paidi Jairaj Film Award for Indian Film Personality, while the NTR Film Award was presented to actor Nandamuri Balakrishna. Popular actor Vijay Devarakonda was conferred the Kantha Rao Award.

The Chief Minister, accompanied by Deputy CM Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, emphasised the government's vision of transforming Telangana into a USD 3 trillion economy by 2047. He urged the film industry to grow in tandem and contribute to this goal. Addressing filmmaker SS Rajamouli, Reddy said Hyderabad should become a base for both Bollywood and Hollywood, and assured full government support.

Balakrishna thanked the state for reviving the awards after a decade and honouring the late folk singer Gaddar. Arjun, who was arrested last December in connection with a theatre stampede, expressed gratitude to the government and Rajamouli for supporting Pushpa's Hindi release. Awards from 2014 to 2023 were also presented. *—PTI*

Allu Arjun receives the Best Actor award from Telangana CM Revanth Reddy **PHOTO: X**

CENTRE APPROVES ₹307 CR FOR KESHKAL BYPASS

RAIPUR, 15 JUNE

The Union government has sanctioned a four-lane bypass road in Keshkal, located in Chhattisgarh's Kondagaon district, with an investment of Rs 307.96 crore to enhance road connectivity. Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari announced the project on the social media platform 'X' on Sunday.

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Minister Gadkari on behalf of Chhattisgarh's people, particularly those in the Bastar region, for the endorsement of the Keshkal bypass.

He highlighted that the bypass will alleviate traffic congestion in the Keshkal Ghat section, facilitating safer and uninterrupted travel. *—PTI*

AI CRASH: DNA TESTS IDENTIFY 47 VICTIMS

24 bodies handed over to kin as tests intensify; high level probe team to meet in New Delhi today

AHMEDABAD, 15 JUNE

Three days after a London-bound Air India plane crashed in Ahmedabad, authorities have so far identified 47 victims through DNA testing and bodies of 24 have been handed over to their families, an official said on Sunday.

As many of the bodies were burnt beyond recognition or damaged otherwise, authorities are carrying out DNA tests to establish the identity of victims of the horrific tragedy.

"A total of 47 plane crash victims have been identified so far through DNA matching. Of these, bodies of 24 victims have been handed over to the respective families. These deceased were from Rajasthan and different parts of Gujarat," Additional Civil Superintendent Dr Rajnish Patel told reporters.

All but one of the 242 passengers and crew on board the Boeing 787-8 (AI171) and another 29 persons, including five MBBS students, on the ground were killed in the plane crash on Thursday.

Bereaved family members of Shagun Modi and Shubh Modi, victims of the Air India plane crash, perform their last rites at Thaltej Crematorium, in Ahmedabad, Gujarat on Sunday **PHOTO: PTI**

State Relief Commissioner Alok Kumar Pandey told reporters that families of all 230 passengers who perished on the flight have been contacted.

Sources said the first meeting of a high-level multi-disciplinary committee formed by the Centre will be held on Monday in New Delhi. —*PTI*

'Going back happily...' says UK couple in video before crash

"Going back happily, happily, happily calm," said British national Fiongal Greenlaw-Meek in a video he posted on social media before boarding the ill-fated flight. Fiongal was travelling with his husband, Jamie Meek. The video shows the happy couple saying, "We are in the airport, just boarding. Goodbye India," In another video shot a day before the crash, Fiongal talks about their stay in India. "It's our last night in India. We are going to... create a vlog about the whole trip," he said.

Jamie's Instagram profile describes him as a spiritual practitioner and yoga teacher, the director and head of events at Wellnessfoundry. On his social media profile, Fiongal describes himself as a fashion designer-turned-spiritual adviser.

Teen who filmed crash says he didn't film video

Yet to overcome psychological trauma caused by the tragic crash, Aryan Asari, 17, reportedly said he only took a screenrecording and did not actually film the video. After a video went viral on social media, he was questioned by the city crime branch as a withness. However, he now said that his friend shot the video and he had simple recorded and shared it.

A TRAGIC END

Ex-Gujarat CM's DNA matches his remains

AHMEDABAD, 15 JUNE

The mortal remains of former Gujarat chief minister Vijay Rupani have been identified through DNA test, officials said on Sunday, as investigations into the crash intensified.

Rupani was among the 241 passengers killed in the horrific crash.

"The DNA sample of former Gujarat chief minister Vijay Rupani matched (with that of his family members) today morning at 11.10am," Gujarat Minister of State for Home Harsh Sanghavi told reporters in Gandhinagar.

Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel met the family members of Rupani and informed them about the DNA match, state Health Minister Rushikesh Patel said.

City Police Commissioner GS Malik also reached the accident site on Sunday morning.

"Around 270 bodies have been brought to the Ahmedabad Civil Hospital so far from the plane crash site," BJ Medical College's junior doctors association President, Dhaval Gameti, said. —*PTI*

Snag delays AIE flight from Kolkata to Ghaziabad by 1hr

KOLKATA, 15 JUNE

The Air India Express (AIE) on Sunday delayed a flight from Kolkata's Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport to the Hindon Airport in Uttar Pradesh's Ghaziabad owing to an undisclosed technical glitch detected shortly before takeoff.

Scheduled to depart from the Kolkata airport, flight number IX 1511 was grounded for over an hour after the aircraft developed an unexpected snag after it had rolled on to the runway for takeoff.

The AIE later issued a statement acknowledging the delay and apologising for the inconvenience caused to passengers.

"Our Kolkata–Hindon flight operated, with a delay, due to a snag on the originally assigned aircraft. Guests were offered complimentary rescheduling or cancellation with a full refund. We regret the inconvenience," said an Air India Express spokesperson.

Media reports quoted airport officials as saying that the aircraft had taxied to the runway and was preparing for departure when a last-minute snag was detected by the flight crew.

Air India Express **PHOTO: X**

- Scheduled to depart from the Kolkata airport, flight number IX 1511 was grounded for over an hour after the aircraft developed an unexpected snag after it had rolled on to the runway for takeoff. The AIE later issued a statement acknowledging the delay and apologising for the inconvenience caused to passengers.

Even as airline has not disclosed the nature of the snag, sources said ground engineers were called in to assess the situation, delaying the departure. —*Agencies*

AIE Guwahati-Kolkata flight delayed over 18hrs

GUWAHATI, 15 JUNE

Passengers on an Air India Express flight from Guwahati to Kolkata faced a harrowing ordeal after being deboarded twice due to a 'technical glitch' in the aircraft before being flown to their destination on Sunday afternoon — more than 18 hours after the scheduled departure, officials said.

The incident involved 170 passengers aboard Air India Express flight IX-1226, which was scheduled to depart from Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International (LGBI) Airport at 9.20pm on Saturday.

The flight was delayed post-midnight because of a "technical glitch" and passengers remained seated inside all the while, an aggrieved traveller said in a video that has gone viral on social media.

On Sunday morning, the passengers were brought back to the airport and boarded the same aircraft around 9:30am. However, they were again informed by the captain and crew that the flight was further delayed due to the same technical issue.

- The flight was delayed post-midnight because of a "technical glitch" . After multiple boardings and deboardings, the flight, which originally had 170 passengers took off 18 hours later, with many opting for different airlines

After some time, they were again deboarded and brought back to the airport with the local Air India Express officials stating that a separate aircraft will ferry them to Kolkata.

Finally, they left Guwahati at 3:34 pm in a separate flight. Some of the 170 passengers opted for other airlines as offered by Air India Express.

"An alternative aircraft was arranged the next day, resulting in an extended delay. Guests were provided with service recovery options, including hotel accommodation, complimentary rescheduling, or cancellation with a full refund," an Air India Spokesperson said. —*PTI*

NAVI MUMBAI AIRPORT: ILLEGAL MEAT SHOPS UNDER SCANNER

MUMBAI, 15 JUNE

The recent Air India plane crash in Ahmedabad has reignited concerns regarding illegal meat shops operating near the forthcoming Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA), which is set to commence operations in August, according to environment activist BN Kumar.

Despite an advisory from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) urging the cessation of such businesses, these establishments continue to thrive within a three-kilometre radius of the airport runway.

This poses potential hazards as the slaughter attracts large birds, such as kites, which may threaten aircraft safety.

NatConnect, an NGO advocating against the open sale of meat at Ulwe, has formally requested the DGCA to address the issue with local authorities.

Kumar highlighted that while investigations are ongoing into the recent crash, a bird strike is being considered a possible cause. —*PTI*

Gujarat assigns grief counsellors to bereaved

People hold candles during a vigil in memory of victims of the Air India plane crash, in Bengaluru, Karnataka **PHOTO:PTI**

AHMEDABAD, 15 JUNE

The Gujarat government has announced the deployment of grief counsellors to support the families affected by the tragic Air India plane crash in Ahmedabad, which claimed the lives of 242 passengers and crew members. Alok Pandey, the state's relief commissioner and revenue secretary, revealed that 230 teams have been formed to liaise with the victims' families.

To alleviate administrative burdens, death certificates will be issued on-site by the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation. Additionally, village patwaris will facilitate the immediate issuance of family relation cards to prevent inheritance issues, according to Pandey.

Each family has been assigned a team led by an officer of deputy collector or tehsildar rank, ensuring that bodies are transported in ambulances to their respective villages or districts. —*PTI*

G7 begins overshadowed by Israel-Iran; Modi arrives in Cyprus

Prime Minister Narendra Modi being welcomed by the members of the Indian diaspora upon his arrival at the hotel, in Cyprus **PHOTO: PTI**

BANFF, 15 JUNE

Leaders of some of the world's biggest economic powers arrive in the Canadian Rockies on Sunday for a Group of Seven summit, overshadowed by an escalating conflict between Israel and Iran and US President Donald Trump's unresolved trade war with allies and rivals alike.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, one of the few non-members invited to attend the summit, arrived in Cyprus on Sunday for a two-day visit during which he will hold talks with President Nikos Christodoulides to strengthen bilateral ties.

In a special gesture, President Christodoulides welcomed Modi on his arrival at the airport. Modi is the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Cyprus in over two decades.

From Cyprus he will travel to Canada to attend the summit.

With other leaders wanting to talk to Trump in an effort to talk him out of imposing tariffs, the summit risks being a series of bilateral conversations rather than a show of unity.

Speaking on a flight to Canada to attend the summit, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said he had discussed efforts to de-escalate the Iran-Israel crisis with Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, as well as other world leaders. Britain is sending fighter jets and other military reinforcements to the Middle East.

"We do have longstanding concerns about the nuclear programme Iran has. We do recognise Israel's right to self-defence, but I'm absolutely clear that this needs to de-escalate. There is a huge risk of escalation for the region and more widely," Starmer said, adding he expected "intense discussions" would continue at the summit.

As summit host, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney has decided to abandon the annual practice of issuing a joint statement, or communique, at the end of the meeting.

Trump is the summit's wild card. Trump is scheduled to arrive late Sunday in Kananaskis, Alberta. Bilateral meetings between other leaders are possible Sunday, but the summit programme does not get underway until Monday.

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy will attend the summit and is expected to meet with Trump, a reunion coming just months after their bruising Oval Office encounter. —*PTI*

This is Modi's 35th trip abroad since May 2023. He has all the energy, excitement, and enthusiasm for such visits. But can he not summon up the empathy for going to Manipur where the people's distress, agony and suffering continues unabated? He has met with nobody from the state, let alone political leaders, since 3 May, 2023.

-Jairam Ramesh, Congress communications head

G7 MEMBERS

Canada • France • Germany • Italy • Japan
UK • US

Russia was part of the group, but was removed following its annexation of Crimea in 2014

NOTABLE SPECIAL INVITEES:

CLAUDIA SHEINBAUM, Mexican President

NARENDRA MODI, Indian Prime Minister

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY, Ukrainian President

PHOTO: PTI

Bodies of Keralites killed in Kenya reach India

KOCHI, 15 JUNE

The remains of five Keralites, including two children aged one-and-a-half and seven, who tragically died in a road accident in Kenya, have been repatriated to Kerala. The bodies arrived at Nedumbassery International Airport via a flight from Qatar, where they were received by Industries Minister P Rajeev and grieving relatives. The minister laid wreaths and expressed condolences on behalf of the state government. The bodies were not displayed for public homage as per the family's request. The funerals would be conducted within the week. The government's prompt intervention helped in conducting several formalities. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan played a crucial role in expediting the repatriation process, mitigating potential delays due to legal documentation requirements. *—PTI*

Shah hands out job letters to 60,000 UP cops

LUCKNOW, 15 JUNE

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday distributed appointment letters to the newly-recruited constables of Uttar Pradesh Police at a ceremony held here.

The event marked the biggest-ever direct recruitment drive for civil police constables in UP. 48,196 male and 12,048 female candidates were selected by the Uttar Pradesh Police Recruitment and Promotion Board.

48.17 lakh candidates, including 15.49 lakh from women had applied for the posts. The selected candidates will undergo high-tech training, for which the capacity of the training centres has been increased to ensure quality instruction, the statement said. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said the "New Uttar Pradesh of New India" witnessed a historic moment.*—PTI*

BJP MP Abhijit Gangopadhyay critically ill

KOLKATA, 15 JUNE

BJP MP Abhijit Gangopadhyay has been admitted to intensive care following acute pancreatitis and gastrointestinal sepsis. The former Calcutta High Court judge, 63, entered a private hospital with severe abdominal pain and vomiting. According to medical reports, he is currently in a stable but critical condition, receiving continuous monitoring and support from a multi-disciplinary medical board. Gangopadhyay resigned from his judicial position in March 2024 to join the BJP and was successful in the Tamluk Lok Sabha constituency during the last elections. The hospital continues to provide updates on his health as his family and party members await further information. *—PTI*

LONE AAP MLA withdraws support to J&K govt

JAMMU, 15 JUNE

Mehraj Malik, the sole MLA from the Aam Aadmi Party in Jammu and Kashmir, has formally withdrawn his support from the National Conference (NC)-led coalition government. This move, however, is not expected to disrupt the government, as it maintains a significant majority with 42 NC MLAs, six from Congress, and support from five independents. Malik stated that his decision was made with the best interests of Doda's constituents in mind, emphasising their welfare as his top priority. Having made history by winning the Doda constituency by over 4,500 votes in last year's assembly elections, Malik has recently been appointed as the state president of AAP, reflecting his growing political influence in the region. *—PTI*

U'khand crash: Pilot had 15-year experience

Chauhan served in Army for 15 years; joined Aryan Aviation in 2024

JAIPUR/YAVATMAL, 15 JUNE

Rajveer Singh Chauhan, the pilot of the helicoptre that crashed at Gaurikund in Uttarakhand on Sunday morning, killing seven people *PHOTO: X*

Rajveer Singh Chauhan, the pilot of the helicopter that crashed in Uttarakhand early Sunday killing all seven on board, had served in the Indian Army for over 15 years and had vast experience of flying missions over different terrains.

The helicopter took off from Kedarnath for Guptkashi around 5.30 am and crashed soon after above the forests of Gaurikund.

A resident of Shastri Nagar in Jaipur, Chauhan was working as a pilot with Aryan Aviation Private Ltd since October 2024.

Chauhan was the captain of Bell 407 helicopter that crashed near Gaurikund in Uttarakhand. Besides him, six people were killed in the accident.

Chauhan had a vast experience of flying missions over different terrains, overseeing aerial operations and had been trained in different types of helicopters and their maintenance, according to his LinkedIn profile.

Former chief minister Ashok Gehlot expressed sorrow over the incident.

"The death of seven people, including Jaipur resident pilot Rajveer Singh Chauhan, in the helicopter crash near Kedarnath is extremely sad. My deepest condolences are with the bereaved families in this difficult time," he said in a social media post.

Chauhan's father has been informed about his demise.

Meanwhile, Rajkumar Jaiswal, a transport businessman, his wife Shraddha, and their two-year-old daughter Kashi hailing from Maharashtra's Yavatmal were among those killed in the helicopter crash.

The family had reportedly left from Wani in Yavatmal on 12 June to visit the Lord Kedarnath temple.

Rudraprayag district disaster management officer, Nandan Singh Rajwar said zero visibility caused by bad weather apparently led to the crash.\ *—PTI*

A British F-35 fighter jet that made an emergency landing at the Thiruvananthapuram International Airport on Saturday night after running low on fuel *PHOTO: PTI*

UK jet makes emergency landing in T'puram

T'PURAM, 15 JUNE

A British F-35 fighter jet made an emergency landing at the International Airport here on 14 June after running low on fuel, sources said.

The jet, which is believed to have taken off from an aircraft carrier, landed safely at around 9.30pm, sources said.

Airport authorities declared an emergency to ensure a smooth and safe landing.

"The pilot reported low fuel and asked for permission to land," the source said.

The aircraft is currently parked at the airport.

Refuelling will take place once approval is received from the relevant authorities in the Central government, sources said on Sunday. *—PTI*

Red alert was issued in Ratnagiri and Raigad in Maharashtra. Orange alert was issued in Palghar, Thane, Sindhudur and Pune *PHOTO: PTI*

8 die as rains lash M'rashtra; alert in coastal areas

- Incessant and heavy rains continued to wreak havoc in various parts of Kerala on Sunday, uprooting trees, triggering mudslides in high ranges and inundating low-lying areas.

MUMBAI, 15 JUNE

Eight persons were killed after being struck by lightning as heavy rains pummelled parts of Maharashtra.

A red alert was issued for Ratnagiri and Raigad and an orange alert for Palghar, Thane, and Sindhudurg and ghat areas of Pune, Satara and Kolhapur.

Ratnagiri recorded the highest rainfall at 88.1 mm in 24 hours.

10 suffered injuries in different parts of the state.

Eight people died in Mumbai, Sindhudurg, Dhule, Nashik, Sambhajinagar, Nandurbar, and Amravati, they said.

The Jagbudi River in Ratnagiri district is flowing above the warning level.

Incessant and heavy rains continued to wreak havoc in various parts of Kerala on Sunday, uprooting trees, triggering mudslides in high ranges and inundating low-lying areas.

People living on the banks of Neyyar river were asked to exercise caution as four shutters of the Neyyar Dam in Thiruvananthapuram were raised to release excess water.

Rains lashed parts of Delhi early Sunday, bringing much-needed respite from the sweltering heat.

The minimum temperature in the city settled at 29.6 degrees Celsius on Sunday.

A 'yellow' alert was issued for Monday in some pockets of southwest and central parts of Jharkhand, while an 'orange' alert was sounded for two days in parts of southwest and central Jharkhand.

Very heavy rainfall were forecast in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas, Purba Medinipur and Alipurduar and Jalpaiguri and moderate rain in Coochbehar, Dinajpur, Darjeeling. *—PTI*

GAS LEAK AT ASSAM ONGC WELL PERSISTS

SIVASAGAR, 15 JUNE

A gas leak persists at an ONGC well in Assam's Sivasagar district following a blowout that occurred on 12 June. In response, 70 families have been relocated to a relief camp due to health concerns stemming from gas exposure.

ONGC director Vikram Saxena has assumed operational control of Well No RDS 147A, where efforts to contain the leak are ongoing. The district administration has indicated that around 1,500 individuals are affected due to the gas smell preventing them from using stoves or starting fires for cooking.

Authorities are providing affected families with cooked meals while closely monitoring the situation. The blowout occurred during a routine perforation job, leading to uncontrolled gas leak. *—PTI*

10 dead; Covid cases at 7,383

NEW DELHI, 15 JUNE

The total active Covid-19 cases in India reached 7,383, with 10 deaths being reported across the country on Sunday. Among the states, Karnataka reported the highest number of cases (46) on Saturday, followed by Rajasthan (12) and Tamil Nadu (11).

Of the 10 deaths due to Covid-19 reported, five were from Kerala, 3 from Delhi and 2 from Maharashtra. At present, Kerala tops the country with 2007 active cases, followed by Gujarat with 1441 and West Bengal with 747.

Reports have attributed the rise in cases to the new JN.1 variant.

Health authorities have advised that people over 60 years of age, or those with heart diseases; diabetes; weakened immune systems; tuberculosis; chronic lung, kidney or liver diseases; obesity or who are unvaccinated should take extra precautions.

They said people should wear masks if they find symptoms such as runny nose, sore throat, headache or fever. All people should to wear masks in crowded places, they suggested.

Meanwhile, a new study published in the journal Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis and Vascular Biology has found that Covid-19 survivors face a two-fold incr=zease in cardiovascular risks – including heart attack and stroke – for up to three years after infection. The risk is higher in individuals, who have not been vaccineted. They should be careful. *—Agencies*

2 UP WOMEN FOUND HANGING IN DIFFERENT PLACES

MUZAFFARNAGAR, 15 JUNE

Two married women were discovered hanging in separate incidents in Muzaffarnagar district, Uttar Pradesh, prompting police to suspect dowry-related abuse as the possible motive.

In the first case, 27-year-old Guddia was found hanging from the ceiling of her room in Abdulpur village on Saturday. Circle Officer (Sadar) Devwrat Bajpai stated that police have registered a case against five individuals, including her husband Sohanvir, father-in-law Balram, and mother-in-law Maya. All are currently absconding.

The victim's brother, Jitender, filed a complaint alleging that his sister had been strangled to death and her body hanged to stage a suicide. Guddia had been married to Sohanvir for four years and is survived by two children.

In the second incident the same day, 36-year-old Urshi was found hanging in her room in Talda village.

A case has been registered against four members of her in-laws' family, including her husband Sudhir, who has been taken into custody.

Urshi's family has accused her husband and in-laws of harassing her over dowry demands. She had been married for six years. *—PTI*

HC denies Yamaha trademark similar to Honda's

MUMBAI, 15 JUNE

In a significant relief to Japanese automobile manufacturer Yamaha, the Bombay High Court has set aside a 2021 order by the Registrar of Trade Marks which had refused to register Yamaha's trademark 'WR', citing similarity with Honda's existing mark 'WR-V'.

Justice Manish Pitale observed that although a surface comparison of the two marks might suggest potential confusion, the registrar had failed to properly assess Yamaha's longstanding international use of the 'WR' mark, dating back to 1990. The judge noted that the registrar had passed a "cryptic" order, without advertising the application to invite objections from the public—an essential step under Section 20(1) of the Trade Marks Act.

The court acknowledged that the marks fall under the same classification (Class 12 – vehicles), but stated that identical or similar trademarks can coexist under exceptional circumstances. Yamaha argued that its 'WR' label pertains to motorcycles, whereas Honda's 'WR-V' is associated with cars, and that both have coexisted internationally.

The court quashed the registrar's decision and directed that Yamaha's application be advertised before acceptance, allowing due process and public input, in line with the provisions of the Trade Marks Act. *—PTI*

CAREER IN MEDICINE

NEET-UG: Kota institute's 4 students in top-10, 39 in top-100

KOTA/ AMRAVATI, 15 JUNE

- Asked Andhra Pradesh Human Resource Minister Nara Lokesh on Sunday launched an initiative to provide free JEE and NEET coaching to the students of government junior colleges.

Four students of Allen Career Institute, a training centre for various competitive exams in Rajasthan's Kota, have secured top-10 ranks in the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG) 2025, the results of which were declared by the National Testing Agency on 14 June.

39 students from the institute were ranked in the top-100 of NEET-UG for admissions into medical colleges, Nitin Kukreja, CEO, Allen Career Institute, said.

Mrinal Jha of the institute bagged the all-India fourth rank, while Aashi Singh secured the second position in the female toppers' list.

Keshav Mittal (seventh) and Bhavya Chirag Jha (eight) also featured in the top-10 list.

Allen has 19 students in the top-50 and 39 in the top-100, including 30 from the classroom programme, and nine from distance learning and online test series programmes.

Seven students from Motion Education, another coaching institute in Kota were placed in the top-100 list.

Over 12.36 lakh candidates out of 22.09 lakh test takers qualified the exam. In 2024 13.15 lakh candidates qualified in the exam.

A total of 1,08,000 seats are available for the MBSS course. Undergraduate courses in dentistry, Ayurveda, Unani and Siddha also utilise NEET results for admissions.

Andhra Pradesh Human Resource Minister Nara Lokesh on Sunday launched an initiative to provide free JEE and NEET coaching to the students of government junior colleges.

Over 1 lakh students from 1,355 government junior colleges will receive specially designed material readied by expert faculty.College hours were extended till 5 pm.*—PTI*

BIHAR CRACKS DOWN ON ARMS AHEAD OF POLLS

PATNA, 15 JUNE

The Bihar government is making massive efforts to check illegal arms and ammunition, with the aim of curbing the use of muscle power in the run-up to the assembly elections, chief secretary Amrit Lal Meena said on Sunday.

Meena said the state government is also planning various changes to licensing regulations, including modulating the allocation of bullets and increasing their cost. "The district administrations and the police have launched a special drive to seize illegal weapons and unearth unauthorised arms manufacturing units, ahead of the assembly polls scheduled later this year," he said.

Meena said officers have also been directed to ensure strict scrutiny of the licensed weapons.

"Licenses of weapons are being verified, and officials have been asked to keep a close watch on licensed gun holders. *—PTI*

5 held for throwing beef near temple: Assam CM

GUWAHATI, 15 JUNE

Five people have been arrested in Assam's Goalpara district for allegedly throwing beef near a temple during the recent Eid festival, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Sunday.

"Lakhipur Police of Goalpara district has arrested the... individuals for allegedly throwing beef near a temple.....," Sarma said on X.

All apprehended people are the residents of Ward No 10 of Khakilamari in Lakhipur police station area.

"A case has been registered and strict action is being taken to ensure all such elements face the full force of the law," the CM said.

Sarma had earlier said that a number of cattle were allegedly slaughtered illegally at several places during Eid festival and parts of the meat were thrown at multiple locations across Assam. *—PTI*

AP asks Centre to help farmers

AMRAVATI, 15 JUNE

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal on Sunday discussed key issues affecting the state's agriculture, trade and export sectors.

Naidu sought Rs 150 crore support through the Tobacco Board for HD Burley procurement, as the state procuring 20 million kg with Rs 300 crore due to falling tobacco prices. The Centre must share this burden by contributing Rs 150 crore.

The chief minister said that the import duty cut on palm oil is leading to lower prices, severely impacting farmers and posing a challenge to national edible oil goals.

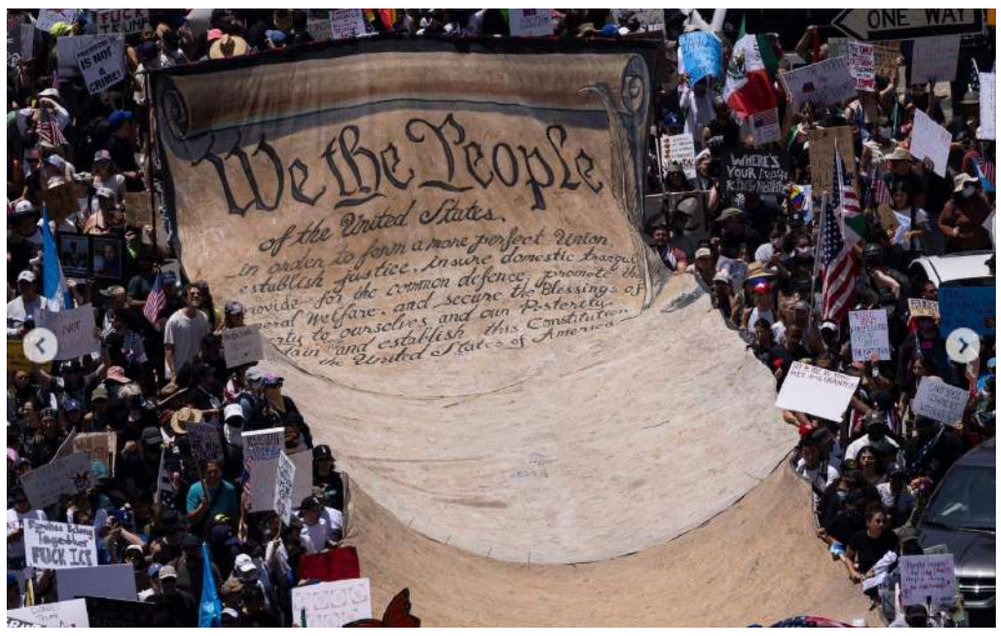
27 per cent US duties on seafood duties is affecting eight lakh farmers. Naidu sought GST cut on mango pulp from 12 per cent to 5 per cent.

Goyal assured to address the matter. *—PTI*

CALM OR CHAOS?

A massive military parade, honouring the US Army's 250th anniversary celebration unfolds in the streets of America. The long-planned celebration coincides with US President Donald Trump's 79th birthday sparking a possibility for protest around the country tied to a turbulent week of immigration enforcement that has involved military deployment in Los Angeles. Trump has brushed off the possibility of both disruptions, with a social media post that said the 'great military parade' would be on 'rain or shine'

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB



Modi's G7 visit: Can India, Canada reset strained ties?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's trip to Canada for the G7 summit presents a rare opportunity for high-level bilateral engagement after ties were marred by tensions and mistrust over killings of Sikh activists.

Modi is visiting Canada next week after he was invited by his Canadian counterpart, Mark Carney, to attend the Group of Seven (G7) leaders' summit, from 15 to 17 June, in Kananaskis, Alberta.

Carney extended the invitation to the Indian premier despite strained ties between the two countries.

India is not a member of the G7, which comprises Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States.

But New Delhi has been invited to the grouping's summits since 2019, reflecting India's growing geopolitical and economic significance.

This will be Modi's first visit to Canada since 2015.

"As vibrant democracies bound by deep people-to-people ties, India and Canada will work together with renewed vigor, guided by mutual respect and shared interests. Look forward to our meeting at the summit," Modi said in a statement.

Political analysts in India have said Prime Minister Narendra Modi visit will likely offer a chance to reset ties with Canada

PHOTO: PTI

Chance to reset ties?

Political analysts in India have said Modi's visit will likely offer a chance to reset ties with Canada.

Relations between the two countries have deteriorated since Canada accused agents linked to the Indian government of carrying out the assassination of 45-year-old naturalized Canadian citizen Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a longtime campaigner for the creation of a separate homeland for Sikhs carved out of India.

New Delhi has dismissed the allegations as "absurd" and "preposterous."

The row strained India-Canada ties so much that both sides expelled each other's diplomats in 2023 and 2024.

But there have been expectations of a thaw in ties since Carney replaced Justin Trudeau as Canada's prime minister in March.

India and Canada share strong trade and people-to-people ties, with bilateral commerce amounting to around USD 9 billion in 2023 and Canadian pension funds cumulatively investing around USD 55 billion in India.

Canada is a top destination for Indian students pursuing higher education, alongside US.

Unresolved issues & likely impact on ties

Despite both New Delhi and Ottawa seemingly making efforts to repair ties, the unsolved investigation into the assassination of Nijjar remains.

Furthermore, Canada is home to the world's largest Sikh diaspora community, with about 800,000 people.

The community includes activists for "Khalistan," a fringe separatist movement seeking an independent state for the Sikh religious minority carved out of Indian territory.

New Delhi has demanded stricter action against the Khalistan movement, which is banned in India.

Canada, on the other hand, has accused India of carrying out a broad campaign targeting Sikh activists on Canadian soil, which Ottawa says has included intimidation, threats and violence.

Against this backdrop, Carney's invitation to Modi drew sharp criticism from fringe Canadian Sikh groups. Protests are expected to take place during Modi's visit.

Nevertheless, David Mckinnon, a former Canadian diplomat, believes Carney made the right decision by inviting Modi to the G7 summit.

Mckinnon said, however, that it's too early to say that everything is back to normal between the two sides.

Focusing on mutual interests

Last month, India's Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and his Canadian counterpart Anita Anand spoke to each other over phone and discussed ways to deepen the bilateral economic cooperation and advance shared priorities.

Ajay Bisaria, India's former high commissioner to Canada, said Modi's presence at the G7 summit offers a chance to stabilize the bilateral partnership, putting an economic and geopolitical focus on ties.

"It always presents a strategic opportunity for Modi to discuss the global commons like climate, trade, supply chains and the broader development agenda with the developed world," said Bisaria.

He also stressed that the gathering will also provide Modi the opportunity to call for a tougher posture toward Pakistan, pointing to recent clashes between the two nuclear-armed archrivals following a deadly attack on tourists in India-administered Kashmir.

New Delhi has blamed Pakistan for backing the attackers, a charge Islamabad denied.

The G7 gathering presents "a diplomatic opportunity to present India's current concerns to key world leaders, while China and Pakistan are out of the room," said Bisaria.

—DW News

SALAR سالار

Uttarakhand's alarming rise in helicopter crashes

Helicopter crashes or emergency landings are occurring at an alarming frequency on the Char Dham Yatra route in Uttarakhand, causing concern among people and the administration.

The latest crash of an Aryan Aviation Pvt Ltd chopper returning from Kedarnath near Guptkashi on Sunday morning, which killed all seven people on board, is the fifth mishap involving a helicopter on the pilgrimage route this year.

A Kestrel Aviation helicopter en route Kedarnath made an emergency landing on the highway in Rudraprayag district on 7 June after developing a technical snag shortly after take-off.

It made a hard landing on the road close to populated buildings, with its tail rotor hitting a parked car. All pilgrims on board, as well as the pilot, escaped narrowly.

The hard landing of the helicopter came about a month after another private chopper on its way to Gangotri temple crashed near Gangnani in Uttarkashi district on 8 May, killing six people, including five women and the pilot, and leaving one male passenger seriously injured.

On 12 May, a helicopter returning from Badrinath to Sersi with pilgrims on board had to make an emergency landing in a school playground in Ukhimath due to poor visibility. All pilgrims were safe.

The helicopter took off again after about an hour when the weather improved.

On 17 May, a heli ambulance from AIIMS Rishikesh crash-landed near the Kedarnath helipad in Uttarakhand due to damage to its rear part. Fortunately, all three occupants on board – a doctor, a pilot, and a medical staff member – escaped unharmed.

"This was the fifth mishap involving a chopper on the Char Dham Yatra route within less than one-and-a-half months of the commencement of the pilgrimage this year," state Congress vice-president Suryakant Dhasmana said.

"It shows that the state government has no control over the aviation firms operating on the route. There is no SOP for chopper operations. In the mad rush for making money, the heli companies have thrown all caution to the wind. There is no cap on the number of sorties being undertaken by them in a day," Dhasmana said.

Social activist Anoop Nautiyal said it appears that the state government is not learning lessons from the recent mishaps involving choppers on the Yatra route.

"Four days ago, news came that there will be strict norms guiding heli operations now – only 3- 4 passengers will be allowed to board a chopper, not 5- 6. However, four days later, seven people, including the pilot, died in yet another helicopter accident," Nautiyal said.

"If you don't want to change the system, why do you tell lies to the people? Will anyone who played with people's lives be suspended? Will anyone take responsibility? Will these helicopters be reined in after five accidents in little over a month, or will they keep crashing like this," he asked.

Soon after the crash on Sunday, Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami held an emergency meeting and asked senior officials to prepare a strict SOP (standard operating procedure) for heli services in the state, making a thorough check of the technical condition of the choppers mandatory.

The Uttarakhand Chief Secretary has been directed to constitute a committee of technical experts, which will prepare the SOP after thoroughly reviewing all technical and safety aspects of heli operations.

The committee will ensure that the operation of heli services is completely safe, transparent, and as per the prescribed standards, an official statement said. Heli operations on the Yatra route have been suspended for two days, Dhami said.

"Operations will resume only after the safety of all passengers is ensured. The safety of the Yatris cannot be compromised," he said.

Dhami also said that weather status should be checked before heli operations.

The chief minister has directed a committee constituted to investigate helicopter accidents to thoroughly probe every aspect of Sunday's crash and earlier accidents and submit a report.

—PTI

NDRF, NDRF and SDRF personnel at the spot after a helicopter crashed near the Kedarnath shrine, in Rudraprayag district, Uttarakhand, on Sunday

PHOTO: PTI

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Seelampur's e-waste economy moves to shadows but carries on silently

In the winding, congested alleyways of New Seelampur, a 500-foot stretch tucked deep inside east Delhi, life hums with the quiet rustle of wires, metal scraps, and fraying hopes.

Every household here seems tied to the business of e-waste -- a world where old computers, phones, fridges, and their innards are torn down, stripped, sorted, and sold.

But the story is no longer what it once was.

As India's e-waste policy evolves and the gaze of enforcement agencies intensifies, the epicentre of one of the world's largest informal e-waste markets has quietly dispersed, not collapsed, but fragmented and slipped into the shadows.

The business hasn't ended, it has just moved -- to Loni, Muradabad, Meerut and smaller towns where it thrives away from the eyes of the regulators, the media, and digital scrutiny.

"The volumes have not really reduced. The business is still alive, but just not visible in Delhi anymore," says Vinod, programme officer at Toxics Link, an environmental NGO.

"Two things are happening -- the market is moving out, and formal recyclers are taking some share, but the informal chain still dominates," he adds.

During a recent visit to the New Seelampur slum, PTI witnessed how this once-bustling hub has morphed into a quieter but deeply embedded network.

As the reporter walked through the slum's narrow lanes, nearly every doorway opened into a home where families were engaged in e-waste segregation.

In a dimly-lit 6x6 feet room, 50-year-old Saleema sat hunched over a knee-high mound of cables. Her fingers, bent with arthritis, sort wires from morning to night, guided only by a low-watt bulb dangling from the tin roof.

For 10kg of wires, she earns Rs 50 -- slightly more if she finds slivers of copper.

A single mother -- her alcoholic husband vanished into irrelevance years ago -- Saleema supports her three children.

Her eldest son has been lodged in Tihar Jail for over a year on theft charges, still awaiting trial.

Next door, 19-year-old Shahheda sits outside her one-room home, her hands still hennaed from her wedding barely a month ago.

Married into this community from Muradabad, she's no stranger to the trade. After making breakfast for her family, she joins her husband and in-laws, segregating wires.

Nearby, Sajid Khan's family of five is also neck-deep in dismantling old electronics.

A shopkeeper segregates e-waste at New Seelampur slum, in New Delhi

PHOTO: PTI

His daughter attends school in the morning and returns to help in the evening -- a pattern repeated in many homes here.

Twelve-year-old Sharmila (name changed) wants to become a doctor – and not just any doctor, but one who treats her neighbours, many of whom suffer from chronic ailments linked to toxic exposure.

"After school, I help my father," she says shyly, as she picks apart an old mobile charger.

Her father, who did not wish to be named, is saving every rupee in the hope of breaking the cycle.

"We want to leave this behind," he says.

On any given day, one might see an array of tasks being carried out here -- circuit boards being pried open, mobile phones separated into batteries, cases, and chips.

For Rs 80, a technician will strip an old phone into saleable pieces. In the makeshift shanties, traders examine CRTs from old monitors, polishing the glass to resell in rural markets. Impure copper sells for Rs 600 per kg; pure fetches up to Rs 800.

Each house is a microcosm of labour -- families bent over wires, children washing dismantled parts, mothers selling components to traders who come knocking. Yet, the total daily income rarely crosses Rs 500-Rs 1,000 per household.

"e-waste is processed in phases -- from collection to dismantling to material recovery -- and each stage generates economic value," explains Vinod from Toxics Link.

"That's why it survives. Every actor in the chain makes something, even if it's meagre."

India's E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2022, was designed to tighten controls, making producers more responsible through extended producer responsibility (EPR). But the system still falls short.

Only about 500,000 tonnes of e-waste were formally collected in 2021-22 -- out of more than 3 million tonnes generated.

And even though companies are mandated to send waste to the authorised recyclers, loopholes abound, says public policy analyst Dharmesh Shah.

Today, the work of burning wires, once openly done in Seelampur, is carried out quietly inside homes or relocated to the satellite towns.

The Chinese-made wire stripping machines have replaced some manual labour, but not all. The actual dismantling -- sorting, stripping, burning -- is still largely done by hand. The traders now operate via phone calls, with less visibility.

New Seelampur's e-waste business is no longer booming, but it hasn't died. It has only decentralised -- faded into the alleys on the outskirts of Delhi.

Yet, its people remain caught between survival and the slow poison of wires. There's resilience here, but also resignation.

"I don't want this life for my daughter. But until I save enough money to move out, we keep pulling these wires apart," Sharmila's father says.

—PTI

Day 3: Israel signals worse yet to come

Nuclear talks called off; Israel warns Iranians to stay off arms-making facilities

A man looks on as explosions light up an oil storage facility after being hit by an Israeli missile in Tehran on Sunday; Israeli security forces inspect remains of a building destroyed by an Iranian missile near Tel Aviv on Sunday and a satellite image of Iran's Isfahan Uranium enrichment facility after Israeli airstrikes on it **PHOTO: PTI**

DUBAI, 15 JUNE

Israel unleashed airstrikes across Iran for a third day on Sunday, threating even greater force as some Iranian missiles evaded Israeli air defences and struck buildings in the heart of the country. Planned talks on Iran's nuclear programme, which could provide an off-ramp, were called off.

Israeli strikes targeted Iran's Defence Ministry early Sunday, after hitting air defences, military bases and sites associated with its nuclear programme, as both sides struck each other's oil refineries.

Explosions echoed across Tehran and were reported elsewhere in the country early Sunday, but there was no update to a death toll put out the day before by Iran's UN ambassador, who said Saturday that 78 people had been killed and more than 320 wounded.

"Tehran is burning," Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said on social media.

Israeli military also warned Iranians to immediately evacuate "military weapons production factories," likely signalling new strikes are coming. Col Avichay Adraee, a military spokesperson, posted the warning on X in Iran's Farsi language. Adraee in the past has signalled other strikes in the Gaza Strip, Lebanon and Yemen amid the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip.

In Israel, at least 10 people were killed in Iranian strikes overnight and into Sunday, according to Israel's Magen David Adom rescue service, bringing the country's total death toll to 13.

At least six people, including two children, were killed when a missile hit an apartment building in Bat Yam, near Tel Aviv. Daniel Hadad, a local police commander, said 180 people were wounded and seven are still missing.

Four people were killed when a missile struck a building in the northern Israeli town of Tamra and another 24 were wounded. A strike on the central city of Rehovot wounded 42 people.

Israel had struck a nuclear research facility in Isfahan, Iran. The International Atomic Energy Agency said four "critical buildings" were damaged, including its uranium conversion facility.

"As in Natanz, no increase in off-site radiation expected," it added.

Israel's strikes across Iran have left the country's surviving leadership with the difficult decision of whether to plunge deeper into conflict with Israel's more powerful forces or seek a diplomatic route. *—PTI*

> **Iran isn't just threatening Israel. Its missiles can now reach deep into Europe. The IDF struck the regime's nuclear facilities at the 11th hour... Israel is doing what must be done**
>
> —Israel's Foreign Ministry

> **We are defending ourselves; our defence is entirely legitimate...This defence is our response to aggression. If the aggression stops, naturally our responses will also stop**
>
> —Abbas Araghchi, Iran's Foreign Minister

> **If we are attacked in any way, shape or form by Iran, the full strength and might of the US Armed Forces will come down on you at levels never seen before.**
>
> —Donald Trump, US President

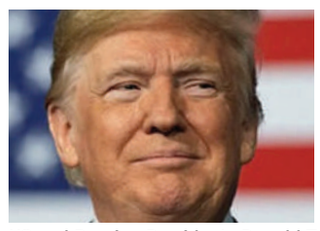
Pak PM promises support to Iran

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif spoke with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, expressing Pakistan's unwavering solidarity with Iran after Israel's attacks, which he described as "blatant provocations". In the phone conversation with Pezeshkian on Saturday, Sharif said Israel violated its sovereignty and territorial integrity, and were in complete defiance of the UN Charter and international law.

Israel strikes Yemen, targeting Houthis

An Israeli strike was conducted in Yemen on Sunday, The Times of Israel reported, quoting defence sources. The strike was reportedly a targeted assassination attempt of a Houthi leader. The IDF has not yet officially commented on the incident. During Israel's strikes on Iran, Yemen's Houthi rebels sided with the Tehran. Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthi rebels said Tehran had a "legitimate right to defend itself".

Putin, Trump discuss Middle East, Ukraine



US and Russian Presidents Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin **PHOTO: PTI**

MOSCOW, 14 JUNE

Russian President Vladimir Putin and US President Donald Trump held a lengthy call on Saturday to discuss the escalating situation in the Middle East and Russia's war in Ukraine.

"Putin called this morning to very nicely wish me a happy birthday, but to more importantly talk about the (conflict). He feels, as do I, this war in Israel-Iran should end, to which I explained, his war should also end," said Trump.

Putin's Foreign Affairs adviser Yuri Ushakov said Putin briefed Trump on his recent talks with the leaders of Iran and Israel and reiterated Russia's proposal to seek mutually-acceptable solutions on the Iranian nuclear issue.

"Putin, having condemned the military operation against Iran, expressed serious concern about the possible escalation of the conflict," Ushakov said.

Putin also emphasised Russia's readiness to carry out possible mediation efforts.

The Russia-Iran relationship has deepened since Putin launched a war on Ukraine in February 2022, with Tehran providing Moscow with drones, ballistic missiles and other support, according to US intelligence findings. Similarly, Moscow has deep ties with Israel, who have notably provided little assistance to Ukraine. *—PTI/ANI*

Knelt on neck by Aus cop, Indian-origin man dies

MELBOURNE, 15 JUNE

A 42-year-old Indian-origin man died days after an Australian police officer allegedly knelt on his neck during an attempted arrest, a media report said on Sunday.

Gaurav Kundi, from Modbury North in Adelaide, died surrounded by his family on Thursday after he was hospitalised for an "unrecoverable" brain injury, 7News Australia reported.

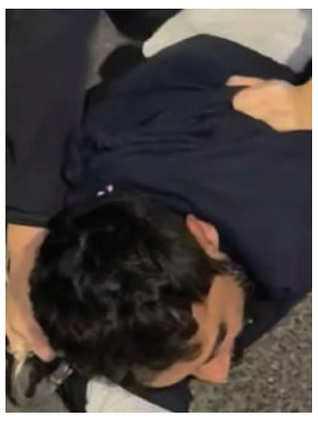
Police attempted to arrest Kundi on Payneham Rd at Royston Park, alleging that it witnessed an "altercation" between him and a woman.

The video footage of the incident showed Kundi being forced by police while he and his wife, Amritpal Kaur, loudly protested.

"I've done nothing wrong," Kundi shouted while Kaur filmed and cried out that the police were acting unfairly.

Kundi was rushed to the hospital after his condition declined and he "became unresponsive" during the attempted arrest. Police said Kundi violently resisted the arrest and was intoxicated.

However, Kaur said her husband was simply drunk and loud, not violent.



Gaurav Kundi and his wife were apparently arguing when a passing patrol reportedly mistook the incident for domestic violence and tried to arrest him **PHOTO: X**

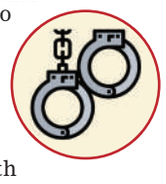
Meanwhile, South Australian Police Commissioner Grant Stevens told ABC Radio Adelaide it would investigate the incident in addition to a probe by the internal investigation section detectives.

Media has compared the confrontation to the George Floyd case in the US in 2020. *—PTI*

After four years, Haiti prez murder probe drags on

PORT-AU-PRINCE, 15 JUNE

Not one suspect imprisoned has faced trial after being charged in the killing of Haiti President Jovenel Moise, who was shot at his home in the capital nearly four years ago.



Gang violence, death threats and a crumbling judicial system have stalled an ongoing investigation. "You failed in your mission," Judge Claude Jean said as he stood and faced a Haitian policeman responsible for protecting the president, who was shot 12 times in Port-au-Prince on 7 July, 2021.

Judge Claude Jean is one of six Haitian judges investigating whether there is enough evidence to warrant a trial for the 20 suspects held in the troubled Caribbean country. Authorities said some of the suspects envisioned a coup, not an assassination, leading to lucrative contracts under a new administration. *—PTI*

272M children out of school worldwide: UNESCO report

NEW DELHI, 15 JUNE

The global out-of-school population is now estimated to be 272 million, over 21 million more than the last estimate, according to UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring Team (GEM).

The team, in its latest report, has pointed out that by 2025, countries will be off-track by 75 million relative to their national targets.

"Two reasons explain this upward adjustment. First, new enrolment and attendance data account for eight million, or 38 per cent, of the increase. The ban on girls attending secondary school age in Afghanistan in 2021 also contributes to this increase," the report said.

"Second, updated UN population estimates account for 13 million, or the remaining 62 per cent, of the increase. Compared to the estimates last used in the out-of-school model, the 2024 World Population Prospects estimate that the number of 6- to 17-year-olds in 2025 (a proxy of the school-age population) is higher by 49 million (or by 3.1 per cent)," it added.

The report says the impact of conflict on out-of-school populations is being underestimated **PHOTO: X @UNICEFCHIEF**

The report noted that the impact of conflict on out-of-school populations is being underestimated.

The change in the global population estimates impacts out-of-school rate and population estimates, but the magnitude of that impact depends on the source of data on enrolment and attendance.

In total, around 11 pc of primary school-age children (78 million), 15 pc of lower secondary school-age adolescents (64 million) and 31 pc of upper secondary school-age youths (130 million) are out of school.

The model used multiple data sources to generate internally consistent trends of regional and global averages. *—PTI*

Israel guns down eight Palestinians near aid site

KHAN YOUNIS, 15 JUNE

Israel military allegedly gunned down at least eight Palestinians, injuring dozens more on Sunday near food distribution points in Rafah, Gaza, health officials said. Witnesses claimed Israeli forces opened fire as crowds approached two sites run by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, which is backed by Israel and the US. The Israeli military has not commented. The shooting occurred at dawn, hundreds of metres from the aid sites. Eyewitnesses described the scene as a "trap", with many killed or wounded. Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis received eight bodies. The new aid system has faced daily violence, while the UN has criticised it for breaching humanitarian principles and lacking oversight. Israel claims Hamas diverted UN aid, a charge UN officials deny. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Macron on way to Greenland, vows European support

NUUK, 15 JUNE

French President Emmanuel Macron is on his inaugural trip to Greenland, a strategic Arctic island that has drawn interest from former US President Donald Trump. The visit aims to bolster Europe's political support for Denmark and its self-governing territory ahead of next week's G7 summit in Canada, where both leaders will be present. Macron's office emphasised that the trip serves as a reminder of France's commitment to sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the sanctity of borders as defined by the UN charter. During the UN Ocean Conference last week, Macron asserted that Greenland is "not up for grabs," indirectly addressing Trump's past remarks about the island. *—PTI*

1 killed, 19 injured in Turkey hot air balloon crashes

ISTANBUL, 15 JUNE

Two hot air balloons collided in central Turkey on Sunday, resulting in one fatality and 19 injured, as reported by local media. The tragic incident took place near the Ihlara Valley in Aksaray province, although the cause of the crash remains unclear at this time. Hot air ballooning is a popular activity in this picturesque region, renowned for its stunning landscapes, ancient churches carved into cliffs, and the iconic "fairy chimneys" of Cappadocia, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Footage from Ilhas News Agency showed a deflated balloon with its passenger basket overturned, while emergency services attended to those injured. The area attracts many tourists seeking to experience its breathtaking scenery from above. *—PTI*

Guinea's junta sets election body for December vote

DAKAR, 15 JUNE

Guinea's military junta has announced the creation of a new body, the Directorate General of Elections (DGE), tasked with overseeing elections, including a constitutional referendum scheduled for September and general and presidential elections planned for December. The junta, led by Gen Mamadi Doumbouya since 2021, had initially pledged a transition to civilian rule by December 2024. However, its failure to meet this deadline led to protests in the capital, Conakry, earlier this year. The DGE will manage the electoral register and uphold electoral integrity, with its leaders appointed by presidential decree. Amid concerns regarding election credibility, the junta dissolved over 50 political parties last year and imposed restrictions on independent media. *—PTI*

MILLIONS MARCH AGAINST TRUMP

'No Kings' protesters flood US streets

A massive crowd in Downtown Los Angeles protests against President Donald Trump on Sunday. The 'No Kings' protests mark the largest nationwide anti-Trump demonstration since his return to office **PHOTO: X**

A demonstrator holds a 'No Kings' sign during a protest in Atlanta; a 16-foot-tall Baby Trump blimp depicting the US President sitting on a golden toilet, being prepared for Sunday's protests **PHOTO: PTI/X**

PHILADELPHIA, 15 JUN

Masses of demonstrators packed into streets, parks and plazas across the US on Saturday to protest President Donald Trump. Marching through downtowns and small towns they sang anti-authoritarian chants mixed with cries for protecting democracy and immigrant rights.

Organisers of the 'No Kings' demonstrations said millions marched in hundreds of events. Governors across the US had urged calm and vowed no tolerance for violence, while some mobilised the National Guard ahead of time.

In Los Angeles, where protests over federal immigration enforcement raids erupted a week earlier, police used tear gas and crowd-control munitions to clear out protesters after the formal event ended. The Marines, in combat gear and holding rifles, appeared for the first at a demonstration since they were deployed to city on Friday.

Similarly, in Portland, federal immigration officers fired tear gas, flash bangs and rubber bullets in an effort to clear out the remaining protesters in the evening. The police department said the event was declared a riot. At least two people were detained.

In Salt Lake City, Utah, police were investigating a shooting during a march downtown that left one person critically injured. Three people were taken into custody.

In Minnesota Governor Tim Walz and law enforcement encouraged people not to attend rallies "out of an abundance of caution" following the shootings of the Democratic state lawmakers. Dozens of events were cancelled, but tens of thousands still turned out for demonstrations in Duluth, Rochester and St Paul.

In Texas, a rally in Austin went off as planned, despite state police briefly shutting down the building and the surrounding grounds after authorities said they received a "credible threat" to Democratic state lawmakers who were to attend. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Hero FinCorp raises ₹260 crore pre-IPO funds

NEW DELHI, 15 JUNE

Hero FinCorp, the financial arm of Hero MotoCorp, has raised Rs 260 crore through a pre-IPO placement, prompting a reduction in its fresh issue size from Rs 2,100 crore to Rs 1,840 crore. This brings the total IPO size to Rs 3,408 crore, down from Rs 3,668 crore, including a Rs 1,568 crore offer-for-sale by existing investors such as AHVF II Holdings, Apis Growth II, Link Investment Trust (via Vikas Srivastava), and Otter Ltd. On 13 June, the company allotted 18.57 lakh shares at Rs 1,400 each to 12 investors. Key participants included Shahi Exports, RVG Jatropha Plantation, Mohan Exports, and AP Properties. SEBI granted IPO approval in May. Proceeds will boost the NBFC's capital base to support future lending. *—PTI*

Adani Green tops in ESG power rankings of NSE

AHMEDABAD, 15 JUNE

Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL) has been ranked first in the utilities and power sector in ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) ratings by NSE Sustainability Ratings and Analytics Ltd, a National Stock Exchange entity. AGEL also features among the top five ESG-rated companies out of the top 100 NSE-listed firms by revenue. AGEL earned an ESG score of 74—the highest in its sector—with particularly strong governance (76) and social (73) scores. The company was praised for its ethical practices, effective risk management, employee welfare, and community initiatives. Chairman Gautam Adani reaffirmed the group's commitment to global-standard governance and non-negotiable compliance. SEBI recognised the NSE's ESG unit as a Category 1 ratings provider in August 2024. *—ANI*

DLF to Invest ₹5.5K crore in Gurugram project

NEW DELHI, 15 JUNE

Real estate major DLF Ltd will invest around Rs 5,500 crore to develop DLF Privana North, a luxury housing project in Gurugram's Sector 76/77. Spanning 18 acres, the project will offer over 1,150 premium flats and forms part of the broader 116-acre DLF Privana township. This follows the success of Privana West and Privana South, which together generated Rs 12,800 crore in bookings. In May, DLF sold all 795 units in Privana West for Rs 5,590 crore within three days, and earlier this year, Privana South saw sales of Rs 7,200 crore. DLF posted record sales bookings of Rs 21,223 crore in FY24-25 and is targeting Rs 20,000–22,000 crore this fiscal. The company remains bullish on demand for luxury housing. *—PTI*

One-third of Goa's taxis on app-based platforms

PANAJI, 15 JUNE

In Goa, nearly one in three taxis is now registered with local app-based platforms, primarily catering to tourists, according to recent government data. Chief Minister Pramod Sawant announced that cab aggregators from outside the state would not be permitted to operate, thereby bolstering local services such as Goa Miles and the Goa Taxi App, which collectively include 5,000 taxis. Goa Miles, affiliated with the Goa Tourism Development Corporation, has a fleet of around 4,000 taxis and sees substantial daily traffic, transporting roughly 15,000 passengers, largely tourists. The state government is currently gathering feedback on its Transport Aggregators Guidelines 2025, with the deadline for comments set for 30 June, leaving local drivers optimistic for improvements in their business. *—PTI*

Iran–Israel heat may scar global markets this week

Investors will also track oil prices and US Federal rates

NEW DELHI, 15 JUNE

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Stock investors will track the ongoing conflict between Iran and Israel, Brent crude oil prices, inflation data and the US Fed interest rate decision for further cues this week, analysts said.

Tariff-related news would also dictate trends in the equity market, experts noted.

Stock markets faced heightened volatility last week and ended in the red amid escalating geopolitical tensions, which sparked a risk-off sentiment. Investor sentiment was hit hard on surging oil prices as fears of supply disruptions resurfaced.

"Indian stock markets are likely to follow the global trend, following rising tension in the Middle East amid the Israel-Iran conflict, which could fuel further pessimism and prompt investors to flee riskier assets. Also, traders will exercise caution ahead of the US Federal Reserve interest rate decision on Wednesday, coupled with other central banks of Japan and the UK announcing their interest rates separately," Ketan Vikam, Head of Sales at financial services provider Almondz Institutional Equities, said.

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled nearly 1 per cent on Friday last week as weak global markets and a spike in Brent crude oil prices weighed on investor sentiment.

Last week, the BSE benchmark tanked 1,070.39 points or 1.30 per cent, and the Nifty declined 284.45 points or 1.13 per cent.

"Looking ahead, markets are likely to remain volatile amid ongoing geopolitical uncertainty and crucial central bank meetings. The US Federal Reserve's upcoming policy decision will be closely tracked, as market participants look for clarity on the timing and magnitude of potential rate cuts, especially in light of mixed economic signals. Domestically, the focus will remain on the progress of monsoon, crude oil price trends, WPI inflation data, and FIIs (Foreign Institutional Investors) activity," Ajit Mishra – SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

Markets would also track trends in global equities and movement in the rupee, analysts said. *— PTI*

Oil prices may hit $100/barrel as tensions escalate

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, 15 JUNE

Oil prices could surge past USD 100 a barrel following Israel's large-scale attack on Iran, analysts have warned. Despite the oil market having substantial spare capacity and storage, fears of supply disruption have driven prices higher. Crude jumped up to 14 per cent after Israel targeted Iranian nuclear and military facilities on Friday. Over the weekend, WTI and Brent crude closed at USD 72.98 and USD 74.23 a barrel respectively—up over 7 per cent.

With oil prices rising, motorists in the UAE may soon face increased fuel costs. June's rates remain unchanged, with Super 98 at Dh2.58, Special 95 at Dh2.47, and E-Plus at Dh2.39 per litre.

Analyst Ipek Ozkardeskaya from Swissquote Bank suggested prices could drop if tensions ease, but broader conflict could drive crude to USD 100 or more. Zaye Capital's Naeem Aslam warned prices could reach USD 120 if energy infrastructure is hit, stating, "Markets are staring down a barrel of volatility."

Julius Baer's Norbert Ruecker expects the rise to be temporary, citing strong supply resilience, high global storage – particularly in China – and over 5 per cent spare production capacity. While closure of the Strait of Hormuz is a concern, it remains a low-probability scenario, analysts say. *—Agencies*

Eight top-10 firms lose total 1.65L cr in market value slide

NEW DELHI, 15 JUNE

The combined market valuation of eight of the top-10 most valued firms eroded by Rs 1,65,501.49 crore last week, with HDFC Bank taking the biggest hit, in-line with a bearish trend in domestic equities.

Last week, the BSE benchmark tanked 1,070.39 points or 1.30 per cent.

While Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and Infosys witnessed net addition in their market valuations, Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), Bajaj Finance and Hindustan Unilever Ltd faced erosion.

The valuation of HDFC Bank tanked by Rs 47,075.97 crore to Rs 14,68,777.88 crore.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of ICICI Bank tumbled Rs 30,677.44 crore to Rs 10,10,375.63 crore.

The valuation of Reliance Industries dropped by Rs 21,516.63 crore to Rs 19,31,963.46 crore and that of State Bank of India eroded by Rs 18,250.85 crore to Rs 7,07,186.89 crore.

The mcap of Hindustan Unilever Ltd dived by Rs 16,388.4 crore to Rs 5,44,893.71 crore.

Bharti Airtel's valuation declined by Rs 15,481.22 crore to Rs 10,50,413.33 crore, LIC went lower by Rs 13,693.62 crore to Rs 5,93,379.66 crore and Bajaj Finance dipped Rs 2,417.36 crore to Rs 5,80,052.09 crore.

However, TCS value jumped Rs 22,215.06 crore to Rs 12,47,190.95 crore and Infosys climbed Rs 15,578.3 crore to Rs 6,65,318.03 crore.

In the top-10 list, Reliance Industries Ltd remained the most valued firm followed by HDFC Bank, TCS, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Infosys, LIC, Bajaj Finance and Hindustan Unilever Ltd. *—PTI*

Affordable housing drops 54% in T2 cities

NEW DELHI, 15 JUNE

The supply of new affordable housing in India's top 15 tier 2 (T2) cities witnessed a steep decline of 54 per cent in January-March quarter of the current year, indicating a shrinking Focus of developers on the affordable housing segment.

The affordable housing segment is defined as the properties priced under Rs 50 lakh.

Real estate data analytics firm PropEquity observed in its latest report that housing supply in India's top 15 tier 2 cities fell by a whopping 35 per cent to 30,155 units in January-March period of 2025, with 48 per cent of the launches in the Rs 50 lakh-1 crore price range.

The supply stood at 45,901 units with 36 per cent of the launches in price range Rs 50L-1 cr in Q1 2024, the PropEquity data shows.

Bhubaneshwar witnessed the highest decline at 72 per cent to 772 units in Q1 2025 while Nashik saw the least decline at 2 per cent to 2466 units.

The report further added that Eastern and Central India, with 68 per cent fall in new launches in Q1 2025, saw the highest decline, followed by 55 per cent in Northern India, 28 per cent in Western India and 26 per cent in Southern India.

Samir Jasuja, Founder and CEO, PropEquity said, "The decline is a result of cautious approach and shifting priorities by developers. Financially robust developers look to launch premium homes to increase their profit margin. As a result, supply of homes under Rs 50 lakh has seen a consistent decline." *—ANI*

₹5.3 CR LOANS APPROVED

FM visits Ladakh; inaugurates multiple development projects

LEH, 15 JUNE

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman visits the Shanti Stupa in Leh, Ladakh, on Sunday *PHOTO: PTI*

During her four-day visit to the Union Territory, Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs, Nirmala Sitharaman, virtually inaugurated several development projects in Leh on Sunday. This initiative underscores the Government of India's commitment to inclusive growth and infrastructure development in Ladakh.

Sitharaman engaged with officials from the Union Territory administration and, on the second day of her visit, participated in a Credit Outreach Programme where she distributed sanction letters from banks to beneficiaries of various Central Government schemes. A total of Rs 5.13 crore in loans were disbursed under schemes such as PM MUDRA, PM Vishwakarma, PMEGP, PM Micro Food Processing Enterprises Scheme (PM FME), and Joint Liability Group (JLG) loans.

Additionally, the Union Minister visited an exhibition showcasing local handicrafts and handloom products from Self Help Groups (SHGs) and local entrepreneurs. She commended the creativity and entrepreneurial spirit of the artisans, recognising their vital role in preserving cultural heritage and enhancing rural livelihoods.

While engaging with Rinchen Dolma, a recipient of the PM Mudra Scheme, Sitharaman praised her achievements and encouraged her to scale up her business. Earlier in her visit, she toured the historic Leh Palace and the Shanti Stupa, further immersing herself in the region's rich cultural heritage. *—ANI*

Temp regulations: RAC makes fear 10–15% sales loss

NEW DELHI, 15 JUNE

Unrelenting heatwave across north and east regions has spiked sales of room air-conditioners (RAC) in June, but intermittent rains in several part of the country amid peak demand season have forced the industry players to lower sales projections to 10-15 per cent for this year.

The summer, which is the peak season for sales of room air-conditioners, has disappointed AC makers this time, though there are some silver lining in June with impulse purchases happening due to the heatwave.

RAC makers said after having an encouraging numbers in February and March, helped by an early arrival of summer, they were expecting a high double-digit volume growth of around 25 per cent from the last year, and had also built up inventory.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) had last week said that temperatures are likely to have a gradual drop from the mid of June as a western disturbance is expected to move in, bringing cooler winds, rain, and thunderstorms.

Sources saidthe current June quarter will be bad for the RAC industry. *—PTI*

CAG creates new unit for 1.6K state PSUs' auditing

NEW DELHI, 15 JUNE

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has announced the formation of a dedicated unit to audit approximately 1,600 state public sector undertakings (PSUs), aiming to enhance auditing efficiency and speed. Deputy CAG KS Subramanian stated that this new vertical will allow auditors to concentrate solely on the state PSUs of specific regions, in contrast to current practices where auditors manage multiple states simultaneously. This structural change is expected to facilitate better information consolidation, benefitting stakeholders.

With the rise of digital transformation, CAG is also focusing on implementing remote auditing techniques that promise greater transparency and collaboration. Such initiatives include the integration of Generative AI and OCR for voucher verification, which are designed to optimise accuracy and reduce errors. *—PTI*

CRITICAL FOR FUNCTIONING

Shortage of rare earth magnets key risk factor for auto sector

NEW DELHI, 15 JUNE

PHOTO: ANI

Rare earth magnets, low in cost but critical in function, could emerge as a key supply-side risk for India's automotive sector if China's export restrictions and delays in shipment clearances persist, according to a report by Crisil Ratings.

The rating agency said this week that a disruption lasting more than a month can already impact electric vehicle (EV) launches, affect production, and weigh on the sector's growth momentum.

Rare earth magnets are integral to permanent magnet synchronous motors (PMSMs) used in EVs for their high torque, energy efficiency and compact size. Hybrids also depend on them for efficient propulsion. The use of rare earth magnets in internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles is largely limited to electric power steering and other motorised systems.

In April 2025, China – the world's dominant exporter of rare earth magnets – imposed export restrictions on seven rare earth elements and finished magnets, mandating export licences.

The revised framework demands detailed end-use disclosures and client declarations, including confirmation that the products will not be used in defence or re-exported to the US. *—ANI*

'Unsecured loan strain may raise credit costs'

NEW DELHI, 15 JUNE

According to a recent report by CareEdge Ratings, credit costs for banks are projected to rise in the Financial Year 2026 due to escalating stress in short-term unsecured loans and the microfinance sector. While banks maintain strong provision buffers, enabling them to absorb anticipated losses, the report indicates that this situation could necessitate adjustments in credit pricing strategies.

Public Sector Banks have significantly bolstered their financial reserves over the past two years, achieving a high Provision Coverage Ratio of 75 per cent to 80 per cent. This strong cushion stems from a reduction in non-performing assets, allowing banks to reduce credit costs. *— ANI*

US DID NOT FRAME IMMIGRATION LAWS WELL: JP MORGAN CHACE CEO

NEW YORK, 15 JUNE

America has not done immigration policies well, JP Morgan Chase (JC) Chairman and CEO Jamie Dimon said, voicing support for merit-based immigration.

"America is indispensable. It's not indispensable because we're better. It's indispensable because (we have) the best military in the world, the most prosperous nation in the world, the best economy in the world, the best technology, the roots of that technology, the freedoms we have. It's what brought people here," Dimon said.

His remarks came during a conversation with Databricks CEO and Co-founder Ali Ghodsi at the Data + AI Summit 2025 in San Francisco last week.

He recalled that his grandparents were Greek immigrants who never went to high school.

Dimon said he has a list of policies that America didn't do well. "We don't do mortgage policies well, we didn't do immigration policies well, we don't do affordable housing policies well…we don't teach work skills properly," he said.

"People come here to be Americans, and it's the natural thing…," he added.

His comments came at a time when the Trump administration has intensified its crackdown on immigration, particularly on illegal immigrants. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Aurionpro Grandmaster Chess to begin in Mumbai

MUMBAI, 15 JUNE

Over 400 players from 17 countries are expected to compete in the Rs 40 lakh Aurionpro International Grandmaster Chess tournament and junior international event, to be held simultaneously from 16 to 24 June. In the Grandmaster section, the top billing has been given to GM Levan Pantsulaia of Georgia. GM Petrosyan Manuel from Armenia is the second seed while GM Luka Paichadze, also from Georgia, is the third seed. The 12-year-old FIDE Master Aansh Nerurkar leads the Indian charge in the junior section, with strong challenge expected from Madhesh Kumar of Pondicherry and Maharashtra's Avirat Chauhan. The star attraction, however, is 12-year-old woman International Master Oshini Gunawardhana from Sri Lanka, whose presence adds international flair and excitement to the field. *—PTI*

Pochettino rejects Pulisic's offer for friendlies

SAN JOSE, 15 JUNE

US coach Mauricio Pochettino declined Christian Pulisic's request to play in pre-Gold Cup friendlies but skip the tournament, insisting players don't dictate plans. "I'm the head coach, not a mannequin," he said ahead of Sunday's Gold Cup opener vs Trinidad and Tobago. Pulisic, citing fatigue after 120 games with AC Milan and the US, wanted rest during the tournament. Pochettino compared his case to Sergiño Dest, who was also excluded after assessment. The coach insisted decisions are based on performance and fitness, not reputation. The US lost both friendlies, extending a rare four-game losing streak. Pochettino hinted Tyler Adams may return from injury and said he hopes to lift a trophy as momentum for next year's home World Cup. *—PTI*

Tendulkar to make 50 playgrounds in Naxal-hit Ch'garh

DANTEWADA, 15 JUNE

Dantewada in Chhattisgarh is transforming into a sports hub, thanks to the Sachin Tendulkar and Mann Deshi Foundations. Under the 'Maidan Cup' initiative, 50 playgrounds are being developed in the district to foster sports culture. So far, 20 multi-sport facilities have been built with community participation, using local materials and costing under Rs 4 lakh each. The aim is to identify and nurture talent in areas once affected by Naxal violence. Dantewada Collector Kunal Dudawat said the initiative connects youth with national sports while promoting resilience and pride. A residential sports city is also in development. Organisers hope the next Tendulkar or Neeraj Chopra emerges from Bastar, redefining the region through sport, not conflict. *—PTI*

Jasprit Bumrah PHOTO: X

Gill to build happy team as India gear up for England Tests

Workload for pacer Bumrah to be decided match-by-match

LONDON, 15 JUNE

India's new Test captain Shubman Gill has set his sights on creating a team environment where every player feels "secure and happy," as the side prepares for a much-anticipated series in England starting 20 June at Leeds.

Gill, 25, admitted he never imagined leading the national side but sees building a positive team culture as his key goal. "Keeping a secure environment and making the player feel confident in his abilities is one of the most important things a leader must do," he told Sky Sports.

Acknowledging the challenges of a demanding schedule and intense competition, Gill said, "If I'm able to do that, I think that would be my goal." He praised former captain Rohit Sharma, who retired from Tests in May, for his clear communication and team-first approach. "Even if Rohit bhai is swearing at you, you wouldn't take it personally. It's always from a team perspective."

Gill also spoke of learning from Virat Kohli's proactive leadership, particularly his tactical acumen during matches. "If a plan wasn't working, he'd immediately switch and communicate clearly with bowlers."

Ahead of his captaincy debut, Gill had discussions with head coach Gautam Gambhir and chief selector Ajit Agarkar, who encouraged him to express himself freely as a leader. "They have no unrealistic expectations, but I do have expectations of myself," he said.

Gill also revealed he kept captaincy talks from his father until the announcement was official, sharing a heartfelt conversation afterward.

On team management, Gill admitted workload decisions for pacer Jasprit Bumrah will be handled match-by-match, following selectors' advice. On England's aggressive 'Bazball' style, Gill said he will avoid preconceived strategies, preferring to adapt as the series unfolds. *—PTI*

Shubman Gill PHOTO: X

India suffers 6th straight loss in Pro League to Aus

India's Jurgraj Singh fights for the ball with Australia's Cooper Burns during the FIH Hockey Pro League game between India and Australia in Belgium on Sunday PHOTO: PTI

ANTWERP, 15 JUNE

India's poor run in the European leg of the FIH Pro League continued as they suffered their sixth straight defeat, going down 2-3 to Australia on Sunday. Despite another close contest, India failed to convert opportunities into points.

Former captain Manpreet Singh marked his 400th international appearance, but it wasn't enough to lift the side. India had earlier lost tightly contested matches against the Netherlands and Argentina.

The match began promisingly for India, with Sanjay scoring in the third minute from a rebound off their first penalty corner. However, the lead was short-lived as Tim Brand equalised a minute later, beating goalkeeper Krishan Bahadur Pathak. Another minute later, Blake Govers made it 2-1 for Australia with a precise strike from the top of the circle.

The Kookaburras then took control, winning four penalty corners in the second quarter, one of which was converted by Cooper Burns in the 18th minute. Pathak made notable saves in the 24th and 25th minutes to keep the deficit manageable. India responded in the third quarter when Dilpreet Singh scored in the 36th minute following a sharp move involving Shilanand Lakra and Abhishek. But despite this resurgence, India couldn't find the equaliser. Australia dominated possession in the final quarter and earned three more penalty corners, but Pathak stood tall to deny further damage. India, however, couldn't create clear chances to level the game.

With this defeat, India remains winless on the European tour and will look to break the losing streak when they face Belgium on 21 June. *—PTI*

Madison loses to 37-year-old Maria in Queen's semis

LONDON, 15 JUNE

Madison Keys suffered a shock defeat in the Queen's Club semifinals, losing 6-3, 7-6(3) to 37-year-old qualifier Tatjana Maria. The German veteran, a mother of two, claimed her first career victory over the reigning Australian Open champion in their fourth meeting.

Ranked No. 86, Maria became the oldest singles finalist on the WTA Tour since Serena Williams won the Auckland Classic in 2020 at age 38.

"You always have to keep going. I love tennis and we live for these special moments," said Maria, who previously reached the Wimbledon semi-finals.

Despite hitting 10 aces, Keys, the No. 2 seed, was unable to break Maria's serve. Her exit followed top seed Zheng Qinwen's earlier loss to Amanda Anisimova, who won 6-2, 4-6, 6-4.

The final will see Maria take on No. 8 seed Anisimova, marking their first meeting since 2018. Anisimova praised Maria's journey, saying, "It's incredible to see what she's doing. Her family is so cute—seeing her kids everywhere is really special. It's going to be a great final."

Maria's run highlights her enduring passion and resilience, making her one of the tour's most inspiring stories this season.

Nishant beats Silva again in pro boxing

NEW DELHI, 15 JUNE

Indian boxer Nishant Dev continued his unbeaten run in professional boxing with a commanding unanimous win over Mexico's Josue Silva at Madison Square Garden Theatre, New York. The 24-year-old super-welterweight won all six rounds, with judges scoring the bout 60-54 in his favour.

Featuring on the undercard of the high-profile Richardson Hitchins vs George Kambosos Jr. fight, Dev impressed with his shot selection and ring control, despite not securing a knockout.

"I don't chase knockouts. I focus on improving my skills and showing growth with every fight," said Dev, adding that his amateur background helps him adapt to longer bouts.

Dev, a 2023 World Championships bronze medallist, outclassed Silva—who came in with a 3-2 record—through superior speed, footwork, and timing. After a cautious start, the tall southpaw raised the tempo in the third round, mixing long jabs with sharp inside combinations.

His footwork and ring IQ allowed him to dominate the pace from start to finish. This was Dev's second professional fight, following his technical knockout win over Alton Wiggins in January.

After a narrow Olympic quarterfinal loss in Paris 2024, Dev turned professional earlier this year. He now trains under former pro Ronald Simms and is signed to Matchroom Boxing, led by renowned promoter Eddie Hearn.

"This is just the beginning," Dev said. "I want to reach the next level."

With two wins from two, Dev is emerging as one of India's most promising prospects in the global professional boxing scene. *—PTI*

MGD1 advance to knockout round of World Blitz Team chess

LONDON, 15 JUNE

Following their historic victory as the first Indian team to clinch the FIDE World Rapid Team Championship title, Team MGD1 continued their dominant form by securing a place in the knockout stage of the World Blitz Team Championship.

Competing in Pool D, Team MGD1 drew only once, against Team Hungary, and won all other matches, finishing the pool stage with 23 match points. Out of 53 teams, the top four from each pool progressed to the knockouts.

The Indian squad, featuring Grandmasters Arjun Erigaisi, P Harikrishna, V. Pranav, Leon Luke Mendonca, Stavroula Tsolakidou, and Atharvaa Tayade, achieved five match victories with all six games won in each, the best record among the group leaders. Erigaisi, fresh from his recent win over Magnus Carlsen in Norway Chess, was the team's standout performer, scoring 11 points from 13 games.

KazChess finished second in Pool D with 22 match points, boosted by Islam Aiten's 12 points from 13 games.

In Pool B, Freedom, led by five-time world champion Viswanathan Anand, advanced alongside Hexamind, both finishing with 22 match points. Despite a defeat to Theme International Trading, Freedom's Le Quang Liem and Haik Martirosyan impressed with 8.5 points from nine games each.

The tournament carries a prize fund of 1,90,000 as the teams head into the knockout phase. *—PTI*

The team includes Arjun Erigaisi, Pentala Harikrishna, Leon Luke Mendonca, Pranav V and Atharvaa P Tayade PHOTO: FIDE

Burns holds steady on soggy Oakmont to lead US Open

OAKMONT, 15 JUNE

Sam Burns carded a composed 1-under 69 on Saturday to take a one-shot lead into the final round of the US Open at a soggy Oakmont. Chasing his first major title, the 28-year-old American stands at 4-under 206, ahead of major-winner Adam Scott and J.J. Spaun.

Burns, inspired by friend and three-time major champion Scottie Scheffler, recovered from a late missed par putt with a birdie on 17 and a nervy two-putt par at 18. Despite not winning since 2022, Burns has shown grit, including a playoff loss at last week's Canadian Open.

Scott, aiming for a second major 12 years after his Masters triumph, shot a 67. Spaun, steady until a final-hole bogey, matched Burns with a 69. Viktor Hovland stayed in contention with a 70, while Mexico's Carlos Ortiz impressed with a 67 despite ending a 30-hole bogey-free streak.

Scheffler, the pre-tournament favourite, slipped eight shots behind after a 70, struggling with momentum.

Oakmont's rain-soaked conditions softened the greens but made recovery tough. Burns capitalised with birdies on the 5th and 13th and crucial par saves from tough lies.

The final round promises a tense finish, with four players under par and Burns eyeing a breakthrough win. *—PTI*

DOMESTIC LEAGUES THREATENED

Club World Cup kicks off & football may never be the same

MIAMI GARDENS, 15 JUNE

After over a year of controversy and speculation, FIFA's expanded Club World Cup launched in Miami on Saturday, and football might be entering a new era. At least, that's the vision being pushed by FIFA president Gianni Infantino.

"This tournament will be the start of something historic that will change our sport for the better," Infantino said, as the month-long event got underway across 11 US cities.

The opening game saw Lionel Messi's Inter Miami held to a goalless draw by Egyptian giants Al Ahly at a near-full Hard Rock Stadium. Despite the lack of goals, the night, complete with a lavish opening ceremony, was a triumph for Infantino, whose name is etched twice onto the Tiffany & Co.-crafted trophy.

The tournament has launched amid significant pushback: legal challenges in Europe, player welfare concerns, and warnings from clubs over FIFA's increasing control in the club game. Critics have warned of burnout and the marginalisation of domestic leagues.

Still, Infantino pushed ahead, expanding the Club World Cup from a 7-team event to a 32-team spectacle. It's now set to be held every four years, with the next edition in 2029 already featuring clubs like Paris Saint-Germain.

"The first edition may not feel historic, but it will become a major trophy," said PSG coach Luis Enrique.

Lionel Messi fans fail to show as Club World Cup opener sees empty seats and Inter Miami supporters outnumbered PHOTO: X @MIRRORUSSPORTS

More than 60,000 fans attended the opener, many wearing Al Ahly red, though FIFA has not released full ticket sale figures. Original prices of $349 per seat were slashed ahead of the match.

Fans like Peter Sadek, an Egyptian living in Orlando, welcomed the moment. "It's been bubbling for a long time. You can see how many of us are here," he said.

Messi nearly delivered a fairytale ending with a stoppage-time curler, but Al Ahly goalkeeper Mohamed El Shenawy tipped it onto the bar. *—PTI*

Ustari, not Messi, stars for Inter Miami

Miami Gardens, 15 June

In a surprising twist, 38-year-old Argentine goalkeeper Oscar Ustari stole the spotlight from Lionel Messi as Inter Miami drew 0-0 with Egypt's Al Ahly in the Club World Cup opener. Ustari, named MVP, made eight crucial saves, including a penalty stop and a key goal-line clearance. A former U-20 World Cup winner alongside Messi in 2005, Ustari returned to the global stage after stints with Pachuca and Audax Italiano. "The team defended well, that's what matters," he said. Luis Suarez hailed him: "Oscar and their keeper were key. Goalkeepers win you points too." *—PTI*